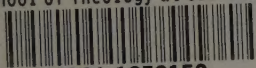


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MEAN IT ?

FRANK DURWARD ADAMS



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DID JESUS MEAN IT?

A SERIES OF
EIGHT GREAT LIFE-LESSONS

BASED UPON
Four Fundamental Sayings of Jesus

AS RECORDED IN
The Sermon on the Mount

BY
FRANK DURWARD ADAMS, D. D.

THE MURRAY PRESS
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AT CLAREMONT
California

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TO
MY LOYAL CONGREGATIONS

IN
Indianapolis, Indiana, Urbana, Illinois
and Elgin, Illinois

Who have heard these Lessons and helped me
demonstrate the truths declared therein

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME
with
Love and Gratitude

CONTENTS

Resist Not Evil:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Getting the Worst of It | 15 |
| 2. The Other Cheek | 37 |

No Thought for the Morrow:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| 1. The Path of Folly | 63 |
| 2. Guaranteeing a To-morrow | 85 |

Judge Not:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Betraying Ourselves | 111 |
| 2. Dealing with Ourselves | 135 |

Love Your Enemies:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. The Mathematics of Hate | 161 |
| 2. Killing Your Enemy | 185 |

PREFACE

The readers of this little book will probably fall into three general classes. The greater number will wish to read the lessons through only once. These will not be greatly interested in the exercises for individual practise and demonstration following each lesson. But a certain number of readers will take up these lessons in the spirit of earnest study, either individually or in groups. Such persons will find the exercises very helpful. Yet others will make this book merely an introduction to a thorough study of all the basic life principles enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount. Bible study groups and Sunday school classes will find it well adapted to such a purpose, inasmuch as each lesson has a definite aim and moves logically forward to the development of a particular thesis. Readers of this type will use not only all the material here suggested, but a great deal more. But, no matter to which class you belong, *read the Foreword first!* It serves as a general introduction, and contains matter germane to everything that follows.

It will be at once apparent to the practised reader that these lessons are simply sermons, prepared originally for pulpit de-

livery. Only a few minor changes have been made, and those only in phraseology. There is some repetition, much more than would be the case if the matter had been written primarily as essays or lessons to be put in printed form. Every reader of books of this kind understands that sermonic literature has a style distinctly its own. So this is not an apology, simply an explanation.

These lessons have been put out in this form only after long and careful consideration. I know what floods of books are pouring constantly off the press, and how few of them are read. But nothing of this particular kind has lately appeared. And the fact that many have been greatly helped by hearing these lessons from the pulpit encourages me to believe that, in book form, they will perform a much wider ministry.

F. D. A.

Elgin, Illinois, September, 1922.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

Following the urgent advice of my publishers, who have never failed to say the right word at the right time, I have refrained from making any changes whatever for the new edition of this book, from either a mechanical or an organic standpoint. It goes out, as it went before, serenely confident that it will ultimately find the hearts of those readers and students of the truth of Jesus who are ready for it. The many, many words of appreciation from those whose demands have quite exhausted the earlier large printing, encourage me to believe that this new edition will serve to hasten a little further the coming of the Kingdom.

F. D. A.

Church of Our Father, Detroit, Mich.
Christmas, 1926.

FOREWORD

In the later centuries of Old Testament history the Jewish preacher was sometimes called the *Darshan*. This name was derived from a word which means literally "to tread out." The preacher, then, was one who was engaged in "treading out" the truth, separating the good grain from the chaff, just as the oxen of those ancient days trod out the wheat on the threshing-floor. The figure is a very happy one, it seems to me.

Following up that thought, I am going to ask you to co-operate with me in the following eight lessons in "treading out" the basic truth contained in a few of the oft-quoted but little understood sayings of the greatest of Teachers. Let me warn you that we shall have to deal with quite overwhelming quantities of chaff. As far as possible I shall refrain from stating positive conclusions, anything that may suggest dogmatism. I shall endeavor to state certain facts and lay down certain ultimate principles. Each one must be persuaded finally *in* his own mind and *by* his own mind. We are all in search of truth. Otherwise, I believe, you would not be interested at all in a book of this kind. So I ask only for tolerance, open-

mindedness, fairness and sweetness of spirit.

We are going to deal with the teachings of the world's most misunderstood character. It has been the fate of every really great soul to be misunderstood and abused by his contemporaries. Let a single illustration suffice. When I made my first visit to the Library of Congress in Washington, nothing interested me more than the exhibit of posters, pamphlets and newspapers printed during the Civil War period, all caricaturing, ridiculing and vilifying Abraham Lincoln. We can hardly believe that such slanderous things were ever circulated. He was called a clown, a butcher, a despot, an ignorant backwoods lawyer, a gorilla, a fool, a scoundrel and a villain. And it must not be supposed that all this abuse came out of the South. Far from it. At last an insane man, incited by such cruel criticism, assassinated him. But to-day, only half a century later, public opinion has about-faced, and Lincoln is revered almost as a god, in the North and the South alike. We are catching up with Lincoln. Now the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.

Nineteen hundred years have passed, yet the world has not caught up with Jesus. He was more than nineteen centuries in advance of his time. Even to-day in Christendom the great majority, while professing to

revere his name and his memory, yet insist that his teachings are impractical ideals, impossible of application in every-day human life. Others, less reverent, though perhaps equally honest, go so far as to call them foolish.

For this the Church is principally to blame. The Church has not kept its eye single. It has temporized for the sake of prosperity and material power. It has bartered its ideals for temporal authority. It has pigeon-holed its divine commission for the smiles of princes and politicians.

But a new crisis is at hand. Things can not go on much longer as they are. We must make a choice. Either we must frankly confess that Jesus was an impossible idealist, and quit professing to follow him, or we must begin to take him seriously. And Shailer Mathews spoke the solemn truth when he said, not long ago, "It is a long, slow process to get people to take Jesus seriously." But that is our immediate and only task. And I propose in this series of lessons to ignore deliberately all theological and metaphysical theories *about* Jesus, and deal directly with some of his fundamental teachings.

I

“RESIST NOT EVIL”

1. GETTING THE WORST OF IT

(Matt. 5 : 38, 39)

THE PRAYER

Father of Truth, Mercy and Light:

We come this day in the humble spirit of learners in the school of life. We know how ignorant we are, and how pitifully we have failed to use such knowledge and wisdom as Thou hast given us in days gone by. We know that we have stiffened our necks and hardened our hearts against the yoke of discipline. We know how foolishly we have erred in our dealings with one another. In contrition and humility of spirit we confess all this, dear Father, imploring Thy long-suffering and grace upon our misguided souls.

We come this day to ponder the fundamental laws of living together. We come to meet Jesus, our Friend and Teacher, face to face. We come to meet him as flesh of our flesh and spirit of our spirit. We are going to meditate upon some of his immortal words. We are persuaded that they point out to us the only way of life. And our prayer this moment is that we may summon the courage of this belief and act in harmony with it. Help us, dear Father, to lay aside all our prejudices, to forget all our preconceptions, to unlearn all our false and misleading lessons, and ponder these things in true sincerity of mind—receive and

ponder them as if we had never heard them spoken before. Just help us to be honest with our own souls; just help us to face the truth like honest men and women.

We crave a new and complete baptism of the spirit of Jesus. Teach us the secret of his abundant life. Make clear unto us the way of his signal triumph over evil and pain and death. Let us know how he was able to forgive; and in the strength of his invincible love, put us forward a little step this day upon the road of conquering vision.

In his spirit and for his sake.

AMEN.

LESSON ONE

1. GETTING THE WORST OF IT

Our text for this lesson is the much-mooted saying of the Master concerning non-resistance. (Matthew 5 : 39.) In this lesson I shall deal with but one phase of it. I shall endeavor to array the facts which seem to me to indicate the complete failure of the world's common method of dealing with evil.

First of all, let us get at the true reading of what Jesus is reported to have said. Fortunately the latest revision of the New Testament is coming more and more into popular use; yet the most familiar texts are still quoted according to the King James Version, which was published in 1611 A. D., more than three hundred years ago. The English language has undergone many changes in three centuries. Certain words have lost their early meaning entirely, or had it greatly modified. But there is another fact of even greater importance. Our knowledge of Greek and the other tongues in which the Bible was originally written is much more exact than it was in the days of King James. The Bible, of all books, should be given the benefit of every advance in human knowledge. In the

old version the saying in which we are now interested is rendered thus: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil." And this is the way it is usually quoted. But the American Revision, published in 1900, and by all odds the most accurate translation ever made, puts it thus: "But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil." Any one acquainted with Greek will tell you that this is a much more accurate translation of the original text.

That one small word, the pronoun "him," may not seem at first to make any difference. But it does. It lifts the whole theme up above the low level of *personalities*, upon which level most of our battles are fought. Let us get the whole saying before us; then we shall understand. Jesus prefaces his higher law by a reference to an old Mosaic statute; and he does this deliberately, for the sake of contrast. "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, *Resist not him that is evil*; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." The right perception of the Master's truth all hinges upon the clear distinction between resisting evil, and resisting *him* that is evil. It is a distinction as wide and as deep as the cradle of the sea. And that is what we are to "tread out" together in this lesson. (See Foreword.)

I. "THE VICIOUS CIRCLE"

The first point I wish to get clearly before you is this: *Such resistance to evil as is commonly employed has always moved in a "vicious circle."*

It is always moving, to be sure. But it gets us nowhere, and it can find no stopping place. An old colored couple were once attending a carnival. Uncle Zeke was simply infatuated with the merry-go-round. He had a dollar in his pocket, so he invested the whole amount in tickets. Clutching the twelve precious pasteboards in his hand, he clambered aboard, placing himself astride the most brilliantly painted horse he could find. He rode and rode and rode, his old black face beaming with happiness. When his last ticket was gone, and the merry-go-round slowed down, it chanced that Uncle Zeke's horse stopped right in front of where Aunt Dinah was standing. She had been watching him with ill-concealed disapproval. As he stepped down, she fixed him with her accusing eye, and said: "Zeke, yo' ole fool, yo' has done spent all yo' money, and yo' has done had a long ride, but it ain't took yo' no place a-tall." The old man had just been going around in circles.

We often speak of Christian nations, but there is really no such thing. There are many Christian people in many nations, but

no Christian *nation*. Our laws, national and international, are based, not upon the teaching of him whom Christendom hails as the Christ, but upon the precepts of Moses. By that I do not mean the Ten Commandments, but the Priestly Code. The law of "blood revenge," distinctive of the Mosaic *regime* and fairly typical of it all, is practised in our very courts every time a man is sentenced to death. As I write these words, a man in the Chicago jail is being forcibly fed to keep him alive, simply that the sheriff of Cook County may strangle him to death! The same law is followed every time any one is punished *in the spirit of retaliation* for any crime whatsoever. It is that retaliatory spirit that makes it the exact opposite of what Jesus taught and demonstrated. And it has never put us forward one step in civilization. For history proves that civilization has gone forward in exact proportion to our humanness in the treatment of offenders. The rule is and has been that *the more people you hang for crime, the more crimes are committed whose penalty is hanging*. Do not take my word for this. It isn't an argument. It is a statement of fact easily verified. Read history and see for yourself. Study the history of capital punishment and be convinced. Neither is it a plea for remission of punishment. It is simply by way of showing that murder will never

stamp out murder. The policy of frightfulness never did anything except spawn its own frightful brood. Like all retaliatory measures, it moves in a "vicious circle."

Until now, with rare exceptions, the nations have pursued this identical policy in their dealings with one another. They have insisted upon "getting even," as we so often and so foolishly do in our individual dealings. "Fight the devil with fire," has been the popular slogan. There is nothing "the devil" likes so well. He understands that kind of fighting, and no other. And what has it done for us? Has it brought peace on earth, good-will to men? No! Every step in that direction has been taken in spite of it, not because of it. Let us see what it *has* done. It has tried to prevent war by being always prepared for war, by pitting physical force against physical force and the spirit of hate against the spirit of hate. "Fight him with his own weapons," has been the battle-cry. One nation built a new type of Dreadnaught; and it was announced that the limit had finally been reached in effective fighting ships. Did all the other nations quit? You know perfectly well that in a short time another nation came forward with a Dreadnaught just a little bigger. What had been accomplished toward preventing war? It simply made war inevitable by inflaming

international jealousy. Another "vicious circle" had been closed. One nation designed a gun with a projectile powerful enough to pierce the armor of any battle-ship afloat. The other nations did not call their battle-ships off the seas. They proceeded to equip them with armor just a little thicker than that gun could pierce. So the first nation had to go ahead and make a still bigger gun. Another "vicious circle" had been closed, that's all. There is never any end to that sort of thing. In the very nature of the case, there can not be any. And if the spirit in which that rivalry was carried on persists, the same endless race will continue; only we shall use air-ships, submarines and poison gas instead of big guns and Dreadnaughts.

Recall the old myth of Epimetheus and Pandora. To Epimetheus Jupiter had given the task of making man and all the other animals, and equipping them with all things needful for their well being. The things he did not need in this work he kept shut up in a tight-covered jar. Woman had not yet been made. So Jupiter created Pandora and presented her to Epimetheus. Now Epimetheus kept this jar in his house. One day Pandora was seized with such curiosity to see what was in it that she slipped off the cover and looked in. Immediately a multitude of plagues escaped to torment hap-

less man—pain and disease for his body, and envy, spite and revenge for his mind. They scattered themselves far and wide, and the earth became the scene of suffering and death. Seeing what had happened, Jupiter was so incensed that he vowed to destroy the earth and all its inhabitants. He determined to destroy it by fire. He seized a thunderbolt, and was about to launch it. But even as he poised it in his hand a terrible thought struck him. It might start such a conflagration that the heavens themselves should be set on fire! So he changed his plan, and decided to drown the world instead.

In my school days I thought of that story as simply a myth. Now I am not so sure. The nations would do well to ponder it, for it sounds like sober history. The conflagration of war that started in the Balkans in 1914 almost consumed the earth. What it did in heaven we can only surmise. And it was made possible only by the fact that nations everywhere had prepared themselves to "resist him that is evil." There is no limit to that insanity when it begins to infect the minds of men. But the most hopeless phase of the matter is that men think they can find a way out by running madly round and round in this same "vicious circle." And now that the world is exhausted and starving, who has learned the lesson? That

we must stop the mad building of war-ships many agree. But how many perceive that nothing will save us but the breaking of the "vicious circle" and the outlawing of war itself?

Without doubt Mr. Edison fairly represents the general attitude of mind. He may justly be called the great high-priest of materialism, for he has denied belief in spiritual substances and values. He recognizes no such thing as moral power. He has faith in nothing but the "vicious circle," and he has faith in that only because we in America have superior material resources. Hear what he said on his seventy-fifth birthday, only a few weeks ago: "America should prepare for war and be ready to give any other nation a dose of its own medicine, and a bigger dose. . . . We should not cease to experiment with deadly gas. We should know how and be prepared to make big guns, and we should be up to date on every piece of human deviltry. Contracts not to do this and not to do that are not safe. We should have our experts, and be prepared for war in seven days' time." And instead of condemning that for the pagan doctrine it is, the newspapers featured it on the front page!

But to what end shall we do all this? Why pile Ossa on Pelion? Does Mr. Edison or any other sane man suppose that such

preparations, no matter how gigantic, will not be paralleled by other nations as fast as they are able? It has been the unswerving policy of Great Britain for half a century to maintain a navy equal to those of its two strongest rivals. Did Great Britain's navy prevent war? What has it ever done except perpetuate the "vicious circle?"

But what will happen if we don't do this, some one asks. It is a perfectly natural question, and a perfectly fair one; but it has no bearing upon the specific point we are now discussing. What I am endeavoring now to do is to array the facts which prove that resisting the evil of war, and preparing to resist it, with the weapons of war and in the spirit of war, has never done anything except make war inevitable and constantly more deadly. Consider these figures: We have had nineteen centuries of so-called Christian civilization. When Jesus was born, the standing armies of the Roman Empire numbered about three hundred thousand men, scattered on police duty all over Europe, Asia and Africa. Had Christians literally followed the teachings of their Master that number would never have been increased. But in 1648 the standing armies of Europe numbered two and a half million men. In the World War, first and last, over thirty million men were mobilized. And what has it accomplished?

Has it brought us one step nearer to the solution of the problem of evil as expressed in war? Forget all your prejudices, all your preconceived opinions, and ponder these facts. Is it anything but a "vicious circle?"

II. GETTING THE WORST OF IT

The method *is* a failure, isn't it? And do we need further proof than the fact that he who employs it always gets the worst of it? He may seem to win, but he actually never does. My hatred may not greatly injure him I hate, but it does outrage my own soul. The desire and the will to "get even," however real and damnable the offense I may have suffered, always injures me more than I can possibly injure my adversary by any means of retaliation whatsoever. His *soul* I can not touch at all. But it is *my soul* that plots and meditates reprisal and revenge. I always get the worst of it.

We need to readjust our whole thought about the nature of evil. Indeed, we should not think about evil at all! That sounds like a paradox, I know. But let us "tread it out." We have altogether too much respect for what we call evil. We regard it as a positive force, whereas it is purely negative. I mean that evil exists only on sufferance. It exists only in the absence of good; and good is a positive force, an affirmative, constructive

force. Evil is like cold, which exists only in the absence of heat. It is a significant fact that, on the thermometer, the figures which indicate cold below a certain point are *minus* quantities. Evil is like darkness, which exists only in the absence of light. Evil is ignorance, which exists only in the absence of knowledge. Introduce heat, and cold vanishes; introduce light, and darkness is done away; introduce knowledge, and ignorance is no more. Just because cold, darkness and ignorance are all negative things.

So I say we have altogether too much respect for what we call evil. Negations are not to be ignored; but we shall find it vastly more profitable to think on the things which make them impossible.

This evil is in men simply because the place it occupies has not been taken by the good, exactly as darkness is in a room because there is no light there to take its place. What annihilates darkness? Only one thing can do it—light. What annihilates evil? Nothing but good. Evil can not be destroyed except by the incoming of good, any more than you can sweep the darkness out of a room with a kitchen broom. Nobody is foolish enough to try that. What do you do? You push an electric button—and the darkness vanishes! It does not “go” anywhere. You can not see the darkness pouring out

of the doors and windows like fog, with the coming of the light. There is nothing there to pour out. It is a mere negation, a kind of vacuum which is gone the instant light appears.

Now it is even so with what we call evil. In itself it is purely negative. It has no reality except that which we are willing to ascribe to it in our *thought*. That is why I said we should not think about it. Think, rather, about that force which alone is able to annihilate it. To him who thinks no evil there is no evil. We are made perfect only in love; Christianity has no other formula. And love, the positive, perfecting power, "thinketh no evil," or, as the more accurate translation has it, "taketh not account of evil," which is much better. Therefore, if we are to solve the problem of evil, *we must quit taking account of it.*

Now there are two ways of taking account of evil. They are equally blundering and foolish, and we are all about equally guilty. First, we can *sympathize with it*, which really means *feeling with it*, merging ourselves into it. Sympathy is one expression of love. You will recall the saying of Emerson, "He that loveth maketh his own the grandeur he loves." It is even so with evil. If we love it, sympathize with it, we make it our own. We give it power over us. We

put into its hand the very dagger that will some day pierce our own hearts. This is the infinite tragedy of all those who range themselves on the wrong side of great moral questions, who espouse and fight for evil causes. Ultimately it proves their undoing. And it all grows out of "taking account" of the thing in a certain way. We forge and hammer out the very chains which are finally to shackle us, mind, heart and soul.

Secondly, we can take account of evil by *feeling resentment toward it*, which is just the opposite of sympathizing with it. In this case we give it reality quite as surely as in the other, but with this difference. Now it fights *against us*, and fights with the very strength which we have provoked. That is why war, and everything of that nature, has been a failure. It is like trying to get light by setting two dark rooms to fighting each other. We shall never be rid of war-ships by eternally struggling to see who can build the biggest one. It can be done only by utterly transmuting the spirit in which war-ships are built. That is why I have advocated the policy of immediate and complete disarmament. We must break the "vicious circle." If you bristle up with resentment toward a warlike man you only make him more warlike. You may succeed in "beating him up," as the current phrase has it, but you will not

disarm his warlike spirit. You just make it the more black and deadly. Germany was beaten into submission, but Germany was not conquered. That is why France has grown fairly frantic with a new spirit of militarism. Not until the selfish, overbearing, fearful militaristic spirit has been displaced by the spirit of universal brotherhood will Germany or any other nation be truly and rightly conquered. When you become angry with an enraged man, his rage becomes more violent, and you yourself descend into the dark Aver-nus of his fury. Who has not learned this, not once but many times, to his unutterable shame and sorrow? And it all comes about through the attitude which we ourselves take toward the matter *in our thought*.

This is not a new philosophy. It was old even when Jesus stated it so clearly and positively and gave it his divine sanction. For example, Lycurgus, the great law-giver of Sparta, who flourished in the ninth century before our era, evidently understood it very well. One of his laws provided that the Spartans should not make war often or long with the same enemy, lest, as he said, "they should train and instruct them in war, *by habituating them to defend themselves*." But one of the Spartan generals did not heed this rule. By making constant incursions into Boeotia, he finally made the Thebans a match for his own

troops. One day he was wounded; whereupon Analcidas declared that he was well paid for making the Thebans such good soldiers, whether they would or no. He had taught them to fight and fight effectively, by the constant war he had waged against them. And he, their enemy and teacher, had gotten the worst of his own policy and method.

And this is according to an eternal principle. Hate breeds hate, and gives it strength by exercise. Call a man a villain, and, if he is not one really you have done your part toward making him one. In your thought he is one already, and you are responsible for that thought! If he is actually a villain, you make him worse. Denounce the unfortunate as thieves, harlots and murderers, and you have confusion worse confounded. They must be dealt with, to be sure; but dealing with them in that spirit will do no good. Name me one thief who was ever reformed by calling him a thief. Name me one harlot who was ever saved from infamy by treating her like a harlot. Jesus always dealt with such with tenderness and pity, and always effectually. Not long ago a man charged with murder was brought on requisition from Indiana back into Illinois. It was the dead of winter, the mercury registering fifteen degrees below zero. The man was brought all the way thinly clad in a summer suit, with no

overcoat and with no mittens for his hands. Do you suppose failure to provide him humane protection from the cold helped to bring him to repentance? Does cruelty ever do it?

They who take the sword shall perish with the sword. They who resist evil with evil always get the worst of it. I believe that you sincerely wish to eliminate evil as far as you are able. And my most solemn word to you is this: *It can never be done by way of the "vicious circle."* Those words of Jesus, "Resist not him that is evil," rest upon an eternal principle. The world must come to it for the final solution of its troubles. But just now the world seems to be much like the small boy who had been shut up in a dark closet for being naughty. He was vigorously kicking the door and yelling. Some kind-hearted person called out to him, "Billy, if you will mind mamma, and try to be good, you won't have so much trouble." The reply came back instantly, "I'd rather have trouble!"

But we must first learn this great lesson as individuals. It must begin with us. It will teach us how to forgive, how to forget, how to love, how to live. It will smooth out the wrinkles of worry, hate and fear on heart and brow. It will reveal the secret of triumphant life. And the practical method of going about it shall be the theme of our next

lesson. In the meantime, ponder and meditate the thought of this little poem, by Henry Victor Morgan:

God's living world's divinely tuned
Unto the needs of man,
To answer back each thought or word
Through Love's eternal plan.

It can not fail, the law is sure,
We can not sow in vain.
We blindly seek some selfish good,
And find our good through pain.

But if in faith we seek for all
The good that we would claim,
Our souls will reap the good we sow,
And all through Love's dear name.

Our very prayers are prophecies
That all we seek is ours;
That good is calling unto us
As rain-clouds call to flowers.

For individual practise and demonstration:

1. Think of a case in your own experience when some one set out to "get even" in the usual tit-for-tat way of the world. How did it turn out? Was the cause of the quarrel removed? Did the parties to it become reconciled? Was any one made happier?

2. Read carefully First Corinthians 13, noting especially what Paul says about Love's manner of dealing with evil.

3. In view of the points made in this lesson, read the story of the unclean spirit and the empty, swept and garnished room, in Matt. 12 : 43-45. What is the application of the parable in your own life? In our national and international life?

I

“RESIST NOT EVIL”

2. THE OTHER CHEEK

(Matt. 5 : 39)

THE PRAYER

Dear Father, we have but one purpose in gathering about this altar to-day. We want to know what our Master meant when he bade us turn the other cheek. We want to learn the secret of meeting evil, of meeting it triumphantly and with unsoiled hearts. We would know what to do when we are assailed, what to answer back when bitter words are flung, how to wrestle with the problems of our incomplete and struggling life.

We know that Jesus was right; and we have come hither in pursuit of the secret of that sublime rightness. We know that his heart is a mirror of the Divine Goodness, and we pray for courage to look clearly and deeply into it this day. Sometimes we have been afraid to do this. Sometimes the mist of prejudice has dimmed our vision. Sometimes that greatest of heresies, a bitter and cynical spirit, has blinded our eyes. But now we are throwing open every door and window of our hearts. Illumine us, O God, with light primeval.

Be merciful unto us, our Father, for we are very needy. That consciousness of need has brought us to this place. Many of these hearts are heavy and bowed with grief. Some are vexed with doubt and tormented with fear.

Some are aching with a sense of loss and bereavement. Some are broken with a sense of failure and sin. All are humbled and repentant before Thee. Nothing but the healing of Thy gracious Spirit can avail us. Nothing but the comfort of Thy great understanding heart can help us. So be merciful unto Thy repentant children, dear Father, and send us refreshing from on high. Let us dare for one hour to take counsel of things noble and great. Let us dare for one hour to sit at our Master's feet and learn the secret of life—life joyous, triumphant and strong.

In his name and through his spirit.

AMEN.

LESSON ONE

2. THE OTHER CHEEK

Was Jesus a weak personality?

Men have somehow got that impression. Religious art and imagery, and a certain type of pious literature, have given us the picture of a weeping, suffering, effeminate Christ. He did suffer and he did weep; but they were not tears of effeminacy, nor was it the suffering of cowardice. What is more moving than a strong man in grief?

Was Jesus weak in his unearthly tenderness on the cross? Nay, verily; for in that hour he was invincible. It is not all poetry that the earth quaked and the rocks were rent in the face of that tragedy on Golgotha. A master-soul was overcoming the world; the greatest of Teachers was demonstrating his own precepts; the noblest of Lovers was loving his enemies and turning to them his other cheek. That is why Jesus is conquering, conquering slowly, but just as surely and irresistibly as the stars in their courses.

I speak of this to anticipate an error into which we almost invariably fall when we ponder the meaning of his injunction, "Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever

shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Most of us, when we first arrive at this point, are apt to jump to a hasty and premature conclusion. We are apt to conclude that the non-resistance of Jesus means being neutral, colorless, spineless, weak and milk-and-waterish. We are apt to think it means doing nothing and being nothing, or just lying down and letting evil men walk all over us.

There could be no greater error. Jesus never taught absurdities, and he never made himself ridiculous. The other day I discovered one of the cards announcing this series of lessons in a somewhat contradictory position. Somebody, and with the best of motives, had set it up in a conspicuous niche, but, unfortunately, upside down. There at the bottom of the card, in bold relief, *but upside down*, were the words, "Did Jesus Mean It?" Well, I am sure he did not mean us to stand his teachings on their heads, nor to make ourselves human jelly-fishes.

I. RESISTING NOT "HIM"

Now let us remind ourselves that the more accurate translation puts the little pronoun "him" into the text. Here we have both negative and positive advice. Whatever you do, says Jesus, don't be petty and personal in your struggle.

Let us make this distinction very clear. Jesus wants us to stand *for* something, not merely *against* somebody. He would have us "pull out the stinger" completely. Too often our efforts against evil are quite in vain because of their purely personal nature. We have hated the *persons* who have seemed to be standing for the things we do not like. We have felt that they should be chastised personally, *and by us*. We make it a personal fight; and personal fights are always little and petty and mean.

There is only one small incident mentioned in the Gospels which commentators have seriously employed in attempting to prove that Jesus ever did such a thing himself. That is the story of the driving of the money-changers out of the court of the temple. Exponents of direct action always remind us of this, and with great gusto. As one wide-awake preacher has caustically said:

"We Christians wouldn't take a billion dollars for that picture. It has been our solace and comfort through all the terrible wars we have fought in the last sixteen hundred years, and it still serves us as a conscience-soother in many a little tempestuous affair of our own. And we never question it."*

*"Our Troublesome Religious Questions," by Edward Leigh Pell, page 175.

Yes, indeed! But we are going to question it right now. It will bear a closer scrutiny than is commonly given it. This story is related in all four Gospels. But neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke even intimates that Jesus employed force or violence. Moral indignation was quite sufficient. The traders and money-changers knew that their presence there was impious and contrary to law. And when this prophet from Galilee boldly challenged them, they scuttled away, made cowards by a guilty conscience. Only in the much later Gospel of John is it stated that he used a show of physical force. And we strain the narratives in vain to make it appear that he felt any personal animus whatever. If the apostles of violence will study this story a little more carefully, they will soon be willing to take a lot less than a billion dollars for the picture. It furnishes them not a bit of ammunition.

So far with the negative side of the text. Now let us "tread out" the positive side of it.

How do we turn the other cheek? Jesus would have us stand for a *principle* which is right, not simply against a *person* who is wrong. Here is a distinction as big as a mountain. It is worth repeating, for it grows bigger the more you think about it. And you marvel that it has been so long and so consistently overlooked.

It is true that doing this sometimes brings us into apparent conflict with persons who are manifesting wrong, but without the spirit of malice and personal retaliation. The stinger has been pulled out; the nasty, malicious desire to say a mean word or land a slap in the face is quite absent. At first thought this may seem to be impossible. You may argue that one can not differentiate between a man and the cause which he serves or advocates. But right there is the nub of the whole matter. Jesus always did it. Zacchaeus as a human soul was one thing; profiteering as a Roman tax-collector was quite another. Jesus kept the distinction, and Zacchaeus was saved. The sinful woman who anointed his feet in the house of Simon of Bethany was just a needy, wretched human soul; the profession she followed was quite another thing. Jesus kept the distinction, and the sinful woman found forgiveness and salvation. And we shall never resist evil with any success until we learn that method. It is possible to stand firmly for any moral principle, and yet make the sinner against that principle feel that you are his personal friend.

When I was but a youth I had an experience which has always been helpful. In those days I was a valiant worker for the temperance cause, as I have always been.

Indeed, my very first training as a public speaker was gained in that way. I had been much influenced by the temper of those who blamed the individual saloonkeeper for all the evil caused by drink. I grew to picture the man who dispensed liquor over the bar as the last word in human depravity. To me he was an inhuman monster, without a single redeeming quality. But that Guidance which has never led me astray when I lowly listened told me one day that hating and abusing the man who sold liquor could do no good, that it only provoked his hatred in return. He was only a victim of a vicious social perversion. And in the inspiration of that illumined hour I drafted a resolution, which was adopted by the young people's society of which I was a member, setting forth explicitly that our efforts henceforth were to be directed against the liquor business *as such*, and not against any individuals who might be involved in it. I have lately heard that the tiny church in which our society met has burned to the ground. I only hope the little book in which that resolution was recorded did not burn with it. But, whether it did or no, the lesson it carried is indelibly inscribed upon my heart. With deep humility I confess that I have not always lived up to its noble ideal. I hope I am drawing a little closer to it. And I know that the closer I

approximate it in practise the more certain and complete is my victory.

Emerson states this clearly in his essay on Character. "They can not come to their ends by sending to Congress a learned, acute and fluent speaker, if he be not one who, before he was appointed by the people to represent them, was appointed by the Almighty to stand for a *fact*—invincibly persuaded of that fact in himself—so that the most confident and the most violent persons learn that here is resistance on which both impudence and terror are wasted; namely, *faith in a fact*." There you have it! Stand for a fact, a truth, a principle. We never need to attack personalities. But in the face of such a stand, impudence and terror are not only wasted, but ultimately put to rout. "Truly," cried the centurion, when he heard that unearthly prayer on the cross, "truly this man was the Son of God!"

And this is turning the other cheek. It means being negative to evil, refusing to "take account" of it, but positive to good, becoming ourselves identified with great moral and spiritual realities. As long as you hold an attitude of animus and personal hostility toward an opponent he will continue to smash you, and smash you and smash you again and yet again on that cheek. He understands that kind of fighting; it is right in his

line. Nothing suits "the devil" so well as to have you fight him with fire. That is giving him the choice of weapons. If we are to accept the traditions, fire is his stock in trade. But just turn the other cheek. Make yourself negative to evil and positive to the good, and watch him draw back. Now he is frightened, now he is bewildered. Weapons like that are new and strange, and he has no defense against them.

There is a story told of General Grant which is an admirable illustration of the point. He was sitting with a group of men engaged in conversation, when the talk became somewhat *risque*. One of the number, who wished to tell an indecent story, glanced around with a meaning smirk on his face, and remarked, "There are no ladies present, I believe." Quick as a flash Grant replied, "No, but there are gentlemen present!" The would-be story-teller drew back as if he had been struck in the face. He blushed to the roots of his hair, and every other man in the room became suddenly interested in something else. Needless to say the story was not told. Grant turned the other cheek. He made himself negative to vileness and positive to decency. But there was nothing personal about it whatever. It was on a higher plane than that. But it might easily have descended to personalities. Had Grant

abused the offender, or even rebuked him, the other would no doubt have become enraged, and there would probably have been the beginnings of a feud. But as it was he was left ashamed and helpless. And it can hardly be said that Grant showed himself either neutral or weak.

II. THE PHILOSOPHY OF IT

Now why is all this true?

Because at the heart of things there is a positive principle of goodness. That principle is like the strong current of a river, moving steadily onward in a certain direction. To identify one's self with a positive truth is to form an alliance with that current and move along with it. To employ any other method is to find yourself struggling against it, and struggling at last in vain. That is why Jesus exhorts us to stand *for* something, not merely *against* somebody. In that way, instead of mere negations, we become positive and powerful. If there are those who are opposed to the right principle for which we stand, we may trust the situation to take care of itself. Just stand for the principle! Ignore the opposing personality. No need to worry about darkness as long as the sun is shining. Where love is supreme hate can find no place of habitation.

When you studied the science of physics

you were taught the axiom that not more than one object can occupy the same space at the same time. For example, I place my hand on the corner of this reading-desk, and as long as it remains there no other object can occupy that same space. Now we are making a spiritual application of the same principle. When your life is filled with the consciousness of truth and love, their opposites, hate and error, can find no place there. Recall that striking parable of Jesus of the swept and garnished room. It was only because the room had been *left empty* that seven other evil spirits came and took up their abode there.

And this is the only way evil can be dealt with successfully. We can be rid of it only by putting good in its place. Not otherwise can the "vicious circle" be straightened out and made to lead anywhere. We can save the souls of men by demonstrating the reality of heaven and righteousness, but never by threatenings of hell and torment. Frightening them temporarily has no saving grace. But lead a soul out into the light, then darkness and the fear of darkness are no more.

This is to get in line with the positive purpose of God, to launch your boat and row with that positive current of goodness. A friend told me of an experience which I have found profitable. His little boy was of

that restless type that is always running away, always wanting to see what is round the corner. I confess to considerable sympathy both with such children and the parents of such children. One day the boy had been unusually difficult, and his father finally put him into the house and locked the door. Then he started down town on an errand. But as he was passing the front window he saw a little face pressed against the pane and two little eyes trying in vain to see around the corner. "That instant," said my friend, "it flashed over me that locking the boy in the house was not curing him of running away. *He was still running away in his mind.*" So the father went back, took the child into the play-room, and got him interested in something else. That was the only sensible thing to do. And it rests upon the principle that two objects can not occupy the same space at the same time. No more can two absorbing interests occupy the same mind at the same time.

A wise mother, who became so enthusiastic over this same principle that she wrote a book about it,* puts the substance of it in one sentence: "Make love to every one, including your own children. If you say

*"Natural Education," by Winifred Sackville Stoner.

pretty things to the kiddies, they will say pretty things to you." That is a wonderful rule of life. If you doubt the efficacy of it, go out and try making love, to the extent at least of thinking kind and loving thoughts, to every one who you fancy may have a grievance against you, including those of the household of faith. Come back in a week or two, and report. That is turning the other cheek; that is co-operating with the power and purpose of God.

We must quit fighting personalities. We must quit fighting evil conditions directly. A head-on collision is always disastrous to both parties concerned. We must employ the method of indirection. *We must put something good in their places.* Then they will share the fate of the darkness when the light is turned on. Our cities have found that parks, playgrounds and swimming-pools have done more to break up the "tough gangs" that infest their streets and alleys than all kinds of police activity. Thus the natural exuberance of youth has been directed into wholesome channels. You can not make a boy good negatively. If he is good at all, he must be good for something. Preaching is all right; going to church is all right; but if that is the only appeal you can make to the average boy—yes, the average girl, too—you stand about one chance in

twenty of winning the allegiance of youth.

The wide-awake church soon learns this. The wide-awake church will sacrifice anything in the way of equipment, or of convenience, even sometimes of staid dignity, to meet the normal demands of youth for recreation and wholesome amusement. If it comes to a choice between the two, the Men's Club, and the Mission Circle, and the Ladies' Society should move out into the street, or adjourn to somebody's parlor, to make room and a welcome for the young people who want to play. The play instinct is a natural and legitimate one. It must be guided, directed and kept within healthful channels. But the man or the woman or the institution that would try to suppress it is just plain crazy. It would be just as sensible and just as easy to try damming Niagara. To that instinct a host of selfish and corrupting influences are making a constant appeal. *And they win*, unless we are wise enough to pre-empt "the playground in the heart of our youth."

These evil influences have been smiting us on the right cheek long enough. May the God of all wisdom give us sense enough to turn the other cheek; sense enough to crowd out the darkness by turning on the light; sense enough to co-operate with the normal and healthy instincts of Nature.

III. WHY NOT TRY IT?

But will it work?

It does work and it has worked where given a chance. But we must give it a chance. And we must not expect to revolutionize the world and change the thought currents of the human race in a day. But as fast as we make the conditions right, this principle will justify itself. The great task just now is to convince men that Jesus was not theorizing but laying down a fundamental law of life.

Why not try it? It's about the only thing that has not been tried. And everything else has proved a failure. Every other method travels in a "vicious circle." Suppose it were tried on the largest possible scale. Suppose the nations were to use a fraction of the thought and money they have worse than wasted in war and preparation for war in really trying to find the basis of enduring peace. Let them begin with the true assumption that the people of one nation have no natural hatred toward the people of any other nation. Let them quit poisoning the wells of human sympathy and fellowship. Let them deal with one another as friends, not as enemies. Let them prepare for peace with as much zeal and enthusiasm as they have heretofore prepared for war. Would war then be possible? You know it would not. War is always built upon lies and

prejudice. And not until this is done can any nation on earth rightly claim to be a Christian nation. Not otherwise can we deal successfully with the evil of war.

This ought to appeal to every thinking person, even to those who have held the theory that the only way to prevent war is to be always ready for a fight. That theory is in the process of being outlawed. People are beginning to study the principle underlying it, and are not so quickly stampeded by a snappy epigram. "Speak softly, and carry a big stick," is the way the late Mr. Roosevelt put it. It is a pungent phrase. It compresses into seven virile Anglo-Saxon words the whole erroneous, anti-social and anti-Christian doctrine of the mailed fist—mailed, but with a kid glove on it! With all due respect to Mr. Roosevelt's memory, with all due recognition of his virility, of his undoubted qualities of leadership, and of his unquestioned honesty and sincerity, it must yet be said that he was on the wrong side of that question. And he was "the last of the Mohicans," the last great world figure to champion a dying cause, the last great prophet of the philosophy of paganism.

How wrong he was can be perceived in a moment by any one who will think. "Speak softly, and carry a big stick." Of course Roosevelt was advocating that as a national

policy. But the essential wickedness of such advice becomes plain the instant it is applied to individual conduct. Here it is! "Be peaceable, but carry a gun." We have long ago decreed by statute that individual citizens shall not carry weapons. No man who wants to carry a gun can be safely trusted with one. He is too easily insulted, too easily provoked. And the very fact that he has a gun is a provocation to every one he meets. Every one knows that the practise of "gun-toting" is largely responsible for the present great wave of country-wide lawlessness. Yet no sensible man advocates universal "gun-toting" as a remedy. He advocates enforcing the law.

The principle is the same in the family of nations. No nation yet has built up powerful armaments on land or sea that did not eventually make use of them against its neighbor nations, even if it had to trump up deliberately an excuse for going to war. The truculent spirit that inevitably goes with huge armaments can not be restrained any more than you can restrain the spirit of the thug who carries a gun. You must first confiscate the gun! Really soft speaking, which means friendly speaking, awaits the time when the "big stick" is laid aside forever.

But before this can be done on any great scale it must be done by a multitude on a

small scale. We shall not have Christian nations until we have a few million Christian individuals. We shall not be able in this church to change the policy of the nations. For the last twenty years friends have been assuring me that nobody would pay any attention to my "crazy talk" about disarmament. Maybe so. But I was never less inclined to believe that than right now. But of this I am sure. We can bring ourselves, *our individual selves*, into harmony with the Divine Program if we have the courage to do it. And unless a leavening proportion of the souls in the churches are willing to do that, we might as well quit using the name Christian. My word for it, it is the most magnificent adventure that ever lured the hearts of men. I do not say it is easy. We do not preach an easy gospel. I do not say it is easy to form an alliance with the everlasting purpose of God. But I do say that it is heroic and sublime.

Are you willing to "tread this out?"

Will you try it for yourself, in your own life, amongst your own associates? Try it a month, a week, or even one day, wholeheartedly. Forget all your prejudices, break all contrary precedents, lay aside all preconceived opinions, and put yourself without reserve into the hands of the Authority of Galilee. In the last lesson I spoke of Mr.

Edison, disagreeing sharply with his policy of military preparedness. Now I want to agree with him most heartily—as I always do when he sticks to the subject upon which he is the unchallenged authority of the world. Edison says that the text-books and recorded conclusions of experimenters in the electrical field have misled him so often that he no longer pays any attention to them. When he wants to know what electricity will do in certain given conditions, he goes ahead, experiments and works it out for himself. Then he consults the textbooks. If their statements agree with his demonstrations, it fortifies his conclusion. If they do not agree, he concludes that their authors are either blundering demonstrators or mere theorists.

Let us go and do likewise. Let us not be misled by the chatter of those who would laugh this to scorn as one of the “foolish” sayings of Jesus. Let us ignore the sophistries of those ministers of a so-called gospel who concede, even argue, that the Golden Rule can not be strictly followed in every-day life. Woodrow Wilson was right when he said that there is not a weak person living who can follow the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule is for strong men—men made strong by the grace of God. Of what use to expect those who have never tried it to understand the mind of Jesus at all? But just take this eter-

nal principle and apply it in your own life, *right where you are*. You will find that all contrary theories are false and misleading.

But, you say, are we not to follow this direction literally at all? If I am slapped on one cheek, does not Jesus mean that I am actually to turn the other? And, if I do, shall I not be slapped on the other cheek, too?

Have I said that you were not to take it literally? And did Jesus ever promise that you might not be slapped on the other cheek? That is another of our too hasty conclusions. I do not find that Jesus ever promised us that we might not be hurt in obeying his precepts. He received his own death-blow after he had sublimely obeyed his own supreme law. But he won! Better a thousand times suffer a wrong than to do one. Better a thousand times be nailed to the cross than to violate the deep sanctions of the Spirit. He ruled his own spirit in that tragic hour. And every moment since that hour he has been ruling in the spirits of other heroic men. We are not offered immunity from buffetings and sufferings and physical pain. Until the world yields to the Christ-spirit these things must needs be. But we do have the promise of moral victory, without which all other triumph is in vain. And we must remember that we are dealing here with a great spiritual principle, not merely an arbitrary rule to be

applied only in specific instances. Obedience to that principle may not always save our skins; but certain it is that it will always save our souls!

You know in your heart that all this is true. Your conduct may be in flat contradiction of it, but you give full assent to it in the secret places of your soul. If you did not believe it, you would never give another cent to support any Christian church. If you did not believe that Jesus was right, you would be indifferent to every preacher who insists upon taking him seriously. For, however erratic and unideal our practise may be, we still cling to our ideals, knowing that life would not be worth living without them. And Jesus is the incarnate human expression of those ideals. Will you not give him a chance?

It is that Ideal which is redeeming the sordidness of the troubled age in which we live. Emerson's immortal lines were never truer than now:

"In the mud and scum of things
There alway, alway, something sings."

Just across the street from my study windows, once upon a time, there was a church. And often in the mornings, as I sat at my desk, the organist came to practise on the great organ there. Between us was a paved street, a very busy thoroughfare. Wagons

rumbled along in ceaseless procession; automobiles snorted their pulsating way; horses' hoofs clattered incessantly; men's voices called out raucously from time to time; and street-cars roared by with monotonous regularity. But through it all, over it all, under it all, sometimes almost drowned in the hubbub of the street, but now and again swelling out gloriously in the pauses of the traffic, like a golden thread in the dull warp of life, came to my ears the music of the organ. I grew to listen and wait for it; for it had become a symbol of the old, old promise that, when men's hearts are fully keyed to the melody that runs through all "the mud and scum of things," as in the providence of God they all sometime will be, then will the very mud and scum of human life vanish away; and all the noises will be subdued and softened and attuned to take their places in the heavenly oratorio of all-conquering Love.

For individual practise and demonstration:

1. Perhaps you are jealous of some particular person. In the light of the principle laid down in this lesson, what is the only right way of dealing with that situation?

2. What bearing has this principle upon the whole question of the training of children?

3. Some one has done you an injury, some one with whom you must continue to maintain somewhat intimate social relationships. How can you turn the other cheek, and effect a reconciliation?

4. You have fallen into the habit of noticing and criticising people's faults, and not much of anything else. What is the only sure way of breaking the habit?

II

“NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW”

1. THE PATH OF FOLLY

(Matt. 6 : 25-34)

THE PRAYER

Father of infinite Peace and Light:

Our prayer this day is for calmness of mind and quietness of spirit. We have been troubled and tossed about by many cares since last we met. We have breathed the atmosphere of unrest; the spirit of the world's confusion has laid hold upon our hearts. We have been too ready to make haste, without knowing clearly whither we were going; too anxious to obtain, without weighing carefully the worth of what we were pursuing. So we find ourselves restless and weary, tired and full of anxiety.

Driven by a deep sense of need, we have sought the stillness of Thine altar. And we rejoice, dear Father, that we have harkened unto the cry of our spirits for the courts of the Living God. Like homing birds, the instinct of our hearts is unerring. And now that we have followed the lure of Thy Spirit into this Sanctuary of Silence, help us, our Father, that we may enter wholly into its enfolding peace. The heart of Thy Life is peace; and all our little lives are hid in Thine. In Thee we live and move and have our being. Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee. However strong the winds may blow, however fearfully the waves may

buffet our frail barques, when we hear Thy Word of Power, a great calmness falls upon us, and there is rest. Thy word is speaking to us just now. And we thank Thee for Thy peace.

Like the Master, whose way of life we are seeking with all our hearts, may we be freed from anxiety. Not through relief from labor and responsibility, nor yet, perchance, from pain, but by finding his secret of trusting day by day. Help us to know Thy will, O God, and give us strength to co-operate with it. Then give us grace to trust Thy wisdom and goodness with all our souls.

Bless Thy worshiping children, dear Father, with every needful gift of faith, hope and love. Then will Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done in all the earth. In the name of him who taught us first the spirit of that petition.

AMEN.

LESSON TWO

1. THE PATH OF FOLLY

We began the discussion of the text of our last lesson by an inquiry into the correctness of its translation. Let us do likewise with the text for to-day.

This saying, like that other, is almost invariably quoted according to the reading of the King James Version, a translation made, as has been said, more than three hundred years ago. But its rendition of this passage is peculiarly faulty and misleading. The old Version gives it thus: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." But Jesus did not say that. According to the reading of the oldest extant manuscripts, this is what he said: "Be not therefore *anxious* for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

This is very different indeed. The Greek verb upon which the whole passage hinges means, "to be anxious, to be troubled with cares." Casting back over the concluding part of this chapter, we find a form of

this same verb used no less than six times in the last eleven verses. And in each case the old translators wrote, "take no thought," or "why take thought." If we are to trust their reading, Jesus is admonishing us to take no thought, not only for the morrow, but for our very food and drink, our life and raiment. But in all six cases the new translation gives it correctly, "be not anxious," or "why be anxious."

I. STOP WORRYING!

"Be not therefore *anxious* for the morrow."

It is a plain admonition to have faith, so much faith that you will not worry. In the last clause we find the clue to the Master's meaning. Sufficient unto the day is *the evil* thereof. Folks never worry about anything but the evil they have, or, I almost said, they hope to have! So pernicious and persistent is this habit with all of us! You are never anxious, you are never worried, about the happiness you expect the future to bring. On the contrary, you are full of eagerness, full of pleasant anticipation; it can not come too soon. But how you do fret over the evil things which may, perchance or peradventure, come to pass!

But the calm, clear, confident word of Jesus is for us not to worry. The late Elbert

Hubbard, in attempting to interpret this saying, called it poor economics. But the truth is that Elbert Hubbard never quite comprehended any of the deeply spiritual teachings of Jesus. Thinkers of his ilk call this the philosophy of the tramp. But in very truth it is the best of economics, and the best of everything else, when we understand what Jesus really meant. Do you know of any better advice than to quit worrying? I know there are persons in this very parish who are literally worrying themselves into their graves. And the things they are worrying about, for the most part, are not the troubles of the present hour. These they can always somehow endure. The things they are worrying about are the evils which they fear may sometime come to pass. If you desire further testimony on that point, ask any doctor.

So let us be done at the very outset with the idea that we have here any advice against taking thought. Jesus never advised people not to think. Thinking is the one thing he is always challenging men to do. "What think ye," is one of his favorite expressions. Except we think, the whole Sermon on the Mount is meaningless. It takes the sanest kind of thinking, both of the head and heart, to understand it. It is the testimony of the greatest philosophers that the

teachings of Jesus are the simplest, yet the profoundest, in all the annals of men. The vice of the world is that it does not think. The world doesn't want to think. The world buys or borrows its opinions in prepared packages, like a patent breakfast food. And too often the stamp, "Made in Germany," "Made in France," or "Made in Great Britain," has been insisted upon. In morals, scholarship, politics and religion, original thinking is so rare as to be almost startling. Sometimes, indeed, it is dangerous!

But I am glad to know that Jesus never encouraged mental indolence. "In so far as a man takes thought," says Horatio Dresser, "he practically makes of life what he will." We all agree with that. About the only real failure is the failure to think. It is only against *anxious thought* that Jesus warns us. And his warning is based upon the most self-evident truth. To be guided by it is the best of economics, the best of therapeutics, and the deepest of spiritual wisdom. Perhaps that is why it is so universally rejected. It is too true, too sensible.

Taking anxious thought, worrying, in other words, is to walk the path of folly. And there are two very simple and practical reasons why this is so. None of you will dispute either of them. They are so very self-evident that I hesitate to mention them, much

less make them the basis of an argument. But the fundamental truths of life, like the fundamental rules of grammar and mathematics, have to be gone over and over again with new applications, if they are to become a part of our subconscious equipment. For example, nobody denies that honesty is the best policy; yet it has to be continually demonstrated in order to keep a working majority of us decently honest. Nobody denies that the wages of sin is death; but all the prophets of God have not been able to halt uncounted multitudes who have insisted upon earning and collecting that kind of wages. Each new generation as it comes along has to be convinced anew, and each individual of each generation.

II. WORRY: THE SPOILER OF TO-MORROW

So the first indisputable point which I shall make is this: *You do not help to-morrow by worrying over it.*

Fret and worry never help anything. Fret and worry affect everything they touch, but always to its injury, often to its mortal hurt. Fret and worry send us out into to-morrow weakened, fearful, unstrung and without confidence, an easy prey to every terror. To seek anything *anxiously* is to lose it in some degree, if in no other way than by reducing

one's capacity for enjoying it. "Which of you," says Jesus, "by being anxious, can add one cubit to the length of his life?" He might have followed that with another question. Perhaps he did. We have only an outline of what he said. "How many of you, by worrying, are actually shortening your lives?" We agree that suicide is a sin. We agree that any man, in his right senses, who puts a pistol to his head and blows out his brains is a sinner, a coward, a deserter from the ranks. Even if he have an incurable disease, and his act shorten his life by only a month or a year, he is responsible for having forfeited so much of his time. But fretters are shortening their lives by months and years, just as surely as if they put pistols to their heads and blew out their brains. They are committing slow suicide. Not only that, but they are spoiling what time they have.

As I have already intimated, we worry for the most part about the evils of the future. We can not look into the future, and it is better so. If it were well for us to know what the morrow is to bring forth, some provision would have been made for our knowing it. Arguing the question of predestination, Calvin quoted the proverb, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." Concealment seems to serve God's purpose; therefore it

serves ours also. Sometimes, in our fretful moods, we think we could improve on some things in this world, if only our wisdom had been consulted in the matter. But about five minutes serious reflection always convinces me that the laws and principles underlying this universe are just what they must be, and are incapable of improvement. I would not even assume the responsibility of ordering the weather for one day. Some one would be sure to wreak vengeance upon me for sending rain to save his neighbor's corn when he wanted sunshine to save his hay. The future is hidden; we can not know it, and that is well. Few of us would have the courage to face its revelations. Those who profess to know what lies beyond the threshold of this present moment are greatly mistaken, or just plain fakes. Yet one needs only claim to know to rally a big following. Predictors of calamities, earthquakes, social cataclysms, and even the end of the world, are listened to with awe, and scarcely less eagerly those who promise riches and a great many other desirable things without the price for them. Every day or two some "clairvoyant" moves on between sunset and sunrise, taking away hundreds of dollars which poor dupes have paid to "attract" buried treasure, which they were to go out later and unearth. Credulity seems to be humanity's middle name, if

the thing we are asked to believe is only fantastic enough.

And when we do not worry about possible misfortune, we worry and chafe to put ourselves beyond the reach of it. We become anxious to secure success or riches. (They mean the same thing in the popular mind.) And thus we put them both forever beyond our reach, or destroy our capacity to enjoy them if they come. Not long ago a prominent official in a neighboring state died suddenly, admittedly broken down by the anxiety and over-work of his successful campaign for office. Did he help the morrow thereby? He won the office, but it killed him. You remember—it was scarcely five years ago—when one of the conspicuous preachers of the country stood up in his pulpit and confessed to his congregation that the lure of wealth and power had proved his ruin. His case is one of the most incredible on record. From his preaching and lecturing he had been enjoying, it is said, an income of at least twenty-five thousand dollars a year. But he wanted more. He wanted to be rich and powerful. So he became a “plunger,” and induced several of his friends to “plunge” with him. The result was that he lost everything, and threw himself upon the mercy of his people. Did he succeed in helping to-morrow by his anxious strife for riches, he who had been

called to preach the gospel of him who bade us take no anxious thought for the morrow? This man probably never showed himself greater than in his humiliation and self-abasement; and the nobility of men was never better shown than in the loyalty of his people to him in his hour of need. But that was in spite of his "anxious thought," not because of it.

Moved by the same spirit of folly, an eminent physician once did a similar incredible thing. He had cured a little child of a dangerous illness; and the grateful mother wanted to show her gratitude in a manner somewhat above that of a mere money transaction. So she went to his office, and said: "Doctor, there are some things which can not be repaid. I really don't know how to express my gratitude. I thought perhaps you would be so kind as to accept this purse, embroidered by my own hand." But the doctor was anxious about his fee, and not disposed to be sentimental. So he replied, coldly: "Madam, medicine is no trivial affair, and our visits are to be rewarded only in money. Small presents serve to sustain friendships, but they do not sustain our families." The lady was cut to the heart. "But, doctor," she faltered, "tell me what is your fee?" "Two hundred dollars, madam." She slowly opened the embroidered purse,

took out five bank-notes of one hundred dollars each, handed two of them to the doctor, replaced the other three in the purse, and walked out of the office. Did his anxiety for his fee help his future any? Was it good economics, after all?

Is it good anything else—except failure?

Do you students get your lessons by worrying over them? Do you business men get more trade by worry? Do you teachers obtain better control in the school-room by worry? Do you housewives manage to expand the shrunken dollar by worrying over it? Do any of you find that worry improves your health, increases your capacity for work, makes you happier or gives you more faith in God? Does it not indeed act just the opposite of all this? Is it not the great Spoiler of To-morrow? If there ever was a pathway of folly, the index finger of worry points it out unerringly.

III. WORRY: THE SPOILER OF TO-DAY

There is another reason why this anxious habit is foolish. By it you not only injure to-morrow, which you have not, but you actually *spoil to-day*, which is all you have!

And that makes the muddle complete! You do this by impairing present efficiency. Who can do his work well with a harried, worried, fearful mind? The student who

comes to an examination in that mental state never does himself any credit. And his case is typical of hundreds.

We have the weightiest reasons for checking what Emerson well calls this "low curiosity" about the future. You can not tell what the future holds in store; and, if you did, it would probably unfit you utterly for what needs to be done to-day. The almost invariable tragedy of those who become absorbed in spiritism is that they lose vital touch with present life and present duties. To-day's duty, to-day's work, are before you. You know what they are; you know what they demand. Every needful means for meeting them is at hand. Your equipment may be small, but you have it, and you can make it suffice. And the work you have to do, so far as the future is concerned, must be done with veiled eyes. It is not good for us to see too much; only that we may see the road, and that one step at a time. Eliza Scudder has put it beautifully in the fine old hymn:

"When over dizzy heights we go,
One soft hand blinds our eyes,
The other leads us safe and slow—
O Love of God most wise!"

Anxious thought also destroys your present happiness. We are so busy worrying about what may happen to-morrow, that to-

day's joys are unperceived. To-morrow's anticipated thunder-clouds obscure to-day's fair sunshine. Let what must happen to-morrow happen if it must! Why spoil two good days? Sufficient *unto the day* is the evil thereof. But it is much more likely that the thing will never happen at all. Most of our calamities are those which never come to pass. Nevertheless we suffer tremendously because of them—in our minds, by anticipation! Well spake Caesar, when the wild lightnings had called him forth from his bedchamber,

“Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.”

More people die of fright than are killed by disease. And countless millions are destroying to-day's happiness by worrying over possible future ills.

We are so anxious to “get somewhere” that we do not enjoy the scenery along the way. This is a besetting sin of our age. Folks go out in their motor-cars for a drive. They are not going anywhere in particular; so they fairly “burn up the road” in their haste to get there. And their eyes are so tortured by the speed and the dust that they do not enjoy the beauties of the roadside. It is a good thing to achieve; he is lacking in some essential quality who does not desire achievement. But it is a rarely wise soul who has discovered the

secret of *enjoying every step* of the path to achievement.

Dr. Frederick A. Bisbee, in his charming little book, "A Summer Flight," has given a fine description of the old Chapel Bridge, at Lucerne, and it illustrates our point beautifully:

"Instead of crossing the river at right angles, as any ordinary bridge would do, it strays off up the stream a considerable distance to an old stone tower, then wanders on still farther up, until a good landing place is discovered, when it turns sharply to the shore. It is a very old bridge, dating back to the beginning of the fourteenth century, and it is easy to think that there must have remained a drop or two of the old lake-dwellers' blood in the builders, which made them so averse to getting to the land when once they began to build. It is a narrow covered bridge of wood, and where the rafters form triangles in supporting the roof the space has been filled in with one hundred and twelve curious paintings, half of them depicting the life of the patron saint of the town and the other half scenes from the story of the Swiss Confederation. Going one way you can read biography, going the other, history. These pictures have grown very dim with age and dirt, and in the faint light which comes through narrow apertures it is impossible to judge of their merit. But there can be no question as to their curious interest; and whoever walks twice across the bridge will have a lasting reason in the back of his neck for remembering them. . . . The new bridges are wide and straight and substantial, and the great tides of travel surge across them, eager to get somewhere by the quickest and

easiest route. Only the leisurely and the sentimental wander through the old covered ways."

He hits the point exactly. We are so anxious about what we want, but fear we may not get, that we overlook the riches that are right now in our grasp. And thus we really spoil our capacity for enjoying present blessings.

In the last lesson I used an illustration about an organ. Let me use another to-day. Years ago in one of my parishes we had a fine new church, but no organ. We could not have one just then, but I was foolishly impatient about it. I felt that we could greatly enrich our service, and that I could preach much better, if we had the inspiration of a fine organ. The manse in which we lived stood not more than two hundred feet from a big sister church, where they already had a splendid organ. Many times every week, especially in the summer when the windows were open, I could hear their music. And I must tell you, though I confess it with shame, that music used to make me unhappy. Why could we not have an organ like theirs?

But how wrong and foolish that was! And one day I awoke to the foolishness of it. I summoned my soul to judgment and said: What a fool you are! You are worse than a fool; you are a robber. You are robbing yourself of a great joy. You are fond of music, and the music across the way is beautiful. But

you can not enjoy it, simply because you are not yet able to have a fine organ in your own church. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? You have no organ to-day, and you will probably not have one to-morrow; but there is nothing more silly than to refuse, on that account, to listen to that sweet music yonder which comes to you as free as the sunlight. If you owned that organ and that church, the music would not be any sweeter than it is at this moment. Wake up, and rejoice in it; and thus fit yourself better to enjoy an organ of your own if you ever get it.

It was a wholesome lesson. And I am persuaded that we might all profit by it. How many women are getting no happiness out of their own modest homes because their neighbors have better ones, and they may never be able to equal or surpass them? How many fret at having to walk when they see their friends glide by in their electrics and limousines? Wake up, friend, and remember that to be able to walk is one of God's most priceless blessings. Think of that when you see the poor fellow on crutches. Suppose you do not sometime own a car! You can walk, and forget the price of tires and gasoline. And it is a safe guess that two-thirds of the people you see riding have lost both the capacity for healthy walking and the power of finding joy in it. Don't spoil to-day. It is all we have.

It is the gift of God's far-seeing love. And, whatever may come to-morrow, the sun will not be any brighter, nor will human love be sweeter, than at this present moment

Let me anticipate our next lesson long enough to say that all our confidence in to-day, in to-morrow and in all the to-morrows, is based solely upon this faith in the present moment. It was out of his consciousness of the Father's unfailing faithfulness that Jesus was able to allay his disciples' fear and anxiety for the future. Not without condition, it is true. That we shall consider in due time. But when the condition has been understood and fully met, the lesson of the lilies of the field, clothed more gorgeously than Solomon in all his glory, and the lesson of the birds of the air, not one of whom falls to the ground without Him, become clear and beautiful, and they enter like a gracious, healing presence into the soul.

God's unfailing faithfulness! Build on that. It is like the deep rock-bed of the earth upon which the foundations of the great telescope rest. They dare not rest them upon anything less deep and firm. If they did, the vibrations of the petty surface life all around would disturb the astronomer's steady gaze into the infinite spaces yonder where the worlds are marching on in their eternal order. So they build the telescope upon the deep

and living rock. In like manner, if you rest your faith upon anything shallower than the love and faithfulness of the Everlasting Father, it will shake and tremble. But on the Rock of Ages it can not be moved forever. Meditate the words of the poet, for they were born of a profound spiritual insight:

“And I smiled to think God’s greatness
Flows around our incompleteness—
Round our restlessness His rest.”

For individual practise and demonstration:

1. Recall two or three of the greatest causes for worry that you have had in your experience. Did they turn out as bad as you feared? Did worrying help you to meet them? Or did they ever come to pass at all?

2. Write down the names of six persons whom you know very well. Do they worry? Do you notice that it is affecting their character or disposition? Does it make them pleasant companions?

3. Try the experiment of thoroughly enjoying just one day, every minute of it. Note as you go along the treasures right at hand which might add to the happiness of your life.

4. Have you really any reasonable excuse for fretting? Be honest with yourself, and answer.

II

“NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW”

2. GUARANTEEING A TO-MORROW

(Matt. 6 : 25-34)

THE PRAYER

Dear Father-God:

For to-morrow and its needs we do not pray. But we do ask Thee for grace to make this day glorious. The Past is dead and gone; it comes not back again. The Future is unborn; with all our anxiety we can not hasten its coming. But To-day is ours! It is full of life and meaning—enough to fill our hearts with thankfulness. It is touched here and there with pain and incompleteness—to keep us from spiritual sloth and physical indolence. Help us to realize its worth, O God, that we may enter into the fulness of its blessings.

We know this is Thy world, dear Father, all Thine, even unto the uttermost. Hasten the day when men shall learn how to hallow it, how to redeem it from ignorance and sin. Give us the wisdom to make holy this little corner of it in which we have been placed—this nation, this city, this church, the homes from which we have come, the daily task which Thou hast committed into our hands.

Thou hast put us as Thy witnesses in this place, to make it glad, to redeem it for Thy kingdom. May we think kindly thoughts and speak words of helpfulness. We would be strength unto the weak and light unto those who

walk in the shadow. Too long have we gone on our own blundering ways. Too long have we been building our houses upon the sand of foolish ambition and pride. Teach us how to build upon the Rock. Give us grace to accept the teachings of Jesus.

How beyond all measure are the blessings which are ours! Our dear ones are about us, finding joy in our companionship. The light of love is shining in their eyes. Familiar voices are vibrant with affection. Faithful hands rejoice to minister to our human needs. Food does not fail us; there is raiment for our bodies; there is snug shelter over our heads. We have a goodly measure of health and strength. Remembering all this, we can only humbly pray to be forgiven the fretful and anxious words we have so often spoken.

So, dear Father, rejoicing in to-day and its mercies, with spirits courageous to meet its opportunities, and with hearts overflowing with gratitude for them all, may we strive in the divinely appointed way to guarantee a happy and glorious to-morrow.

In the name of him who has revealed the secret.

AMEN.

LESSON TWO

2. GUARANTEEING A TO-MORROW

First of all, let us sum up briefly the last lesson.

You remember we stressed the point that the common translation of this text leaves much to be desired. Jesus did not say to his disciples, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow," as the Authorized Version has it. He said, rather, "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow." This difference can not be too much emphasized. It was furthest from the Master's purpose to say anything that would encourage carelessness in thought or action. Jesus would have been the last to discount a definite, purposeful plan of life. But what he sought above all just here was to show his followers the wrong of worry and fretful care.

Two very obvious reasons were set forth to prove the evil of worrying; first, that worry does not help to-morrow, and second, that it does hurt to-day. In other words, worry is the Spoiler of both To-day and To-morrow. These statements are axioms, and are not to be disputed any more than is the axiom that a straight line is the shortest

distance between two points. But it must have been quite apparent that it was really a bit of negative work we were doing. It fortified some of our previous sensible conclusions, but it did not set us forward very far. It cleared the ground, but we did not build anything.

Of course it had to be done. Before we can build a new structure, the old one which stands on the site must be torn down and the old brick and stone carried away. That was our task in the last lesson—clearing the ground. To-day we are to do the affirmative, constructive work. This always requires a little more effort and a little more concentration. Usually it is not quite as interesting. Large crowds always stand around to watch a wrecking crew at work. They like to hear the crash of falling things. But the steady, constructive toil of the builders across the street does not create much excitement. This is a parable of human life, and worthy to be remembered.

I. PROVING OUR FAITH

“Be not therefore anxious for the morrow.”

Prove your faith by refraining from worry; trust in God so implicitly that you will have no fear. This is the gist of what Jesus said. He assumes his disciples' belief in God. As a

matter of fact, he always did that. Jesus never argued with anybody about the existence of God. That he always takes for granted. But he wants to convince them that God is a fatherly God, and to persuade them to act in harmony with such a faith.

The preacher of to-day starts with the same assumption; and, if he is alert to the needs of to-day, he undertakes the same task. His hearers already believe in the existence of God. Those who do not are seldom churchgoers. The task of the preacher is to persuade a few *to act as if they believed it*. And if ever there was a real man's size job, this is one. Our need to-day is not great campaigns, attended with more or less excitement, to get men to accept certain theological dogmas, though that undoubtedly has its place and its proper function. What the world needs is to get a few men and women, already in the churches, already believers in God, already committed to the Christian faith as a program of life, actually *to begin doing* a few of the fundamental things that Jesus told us to do. A half dozen such persons in each church in the community, really living the Sermon on the Mount, would in a short time put us beyond the need of "tabernacle meetings," or any other form of sensational religious effort. It would start a real revival of real religion, and start it in the right way,

in the right place, and with the right people.

That is what Jesus was trying to do—start a revival among his own followers. A revival of faith in God *as their Father*. He wanted them to know that their Father would care for them, *on condition* that they were heart and soul absorbed in the work they had been called to do. This is your Father's world, he assures them; and all its resources are at the service of those who are laboring not to possess the world but to save the world. He gives us the same assurance. But don't get the idea that by "saving" the world I mean that you are to give up your present work and go to preaching, or go as a foreign missionary, or undertake any one of the specific tasks we have narrowly termed "religious callings." Some of you may have to do just that to meet the requirement that God is laying upon your souls. But the vast majority must stay right where they are, and apply the principles of Jesus in their present occupations. We need preachers. There is a crying need for them in all the denominations. But there is a vastly greater need for preachers and laymen alike who have the courage to demonstrate that the principles of the gospel will work wherever given a chance.

But hold fast to that distinction.

I am not speaking now of some dogmatic statement to which you must or must not

give intellectual assent. I mean simple, downright, honest-to-God *doing the things* Jesus told us to do; like loving our neighbors as ourselves, including our enemies; like forgiving one another as we would be forgiven; like refraining from judging one another; like returning good for evil, instead of vainly resisting evil with evil; like throwing worry to the winds and seeking *first* the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof. To such as will do this all needful material things will be added: food, as the birds of the air are fed; raiment, as the lilies of the field are arrayed. These things will come out of the service in which we are seeking first the kingdom. And in such activity only is found perfect freedom from anxiety. When we once get into the heart of the argument, we find it unanswerable.

II. WORKING IT OUT

Now to get at the constructive side of it.

Worrying does not help to-day or to-morrow. So far so good. But telling people *just that* is not going to help very much. We must know what to do to keep worry out, to make it impossible. And this brings us back to the principle laid down in the first lesson of this course. We get rid of darkness only by filling the room with light; we can be rid of evil only by putting good in its place. We

must pre-empt the field, we must get there first. Unless men's minds are filled with that which makes worry impossible, they are going to worry, and that's a foregone conclusion.

We are dealing here with one of the most positive, consistent and logical of principles. The practise of it is an endless spiritual delight. We come at it by means of three definite, positive steps:

First, take hold right where you are.

Second, invest all your resources in the task of the moment.

Third, be whole-hearted about it, and hold nothing back.

It will be apparent that the second and third steps are really the same; but I have chosen to state them in this way for the sake of added emphasis.

Let us consider them in the order named.

First, take hold right where you are. You are there just now because God means you to be there—for the present moment, at least. If you have not read a little story entitled, "That Something," you would do well to do so. It is the story of a man who was "down and out," and ready to give up. He was begging for food, and walking the streets all night because he had no bed. But a friendly, searching word from a man whom he had asked for aid roused him to a consciousness

of his own power and resources. He took hold of the first thing he saw, which happened to be helping a passing errand-boy carry a heavy armful of bundles. He tackled it with the feeling that it was *his job*, and it led him at last to a place of large usefulness in the world.

The task you have now is the one you ought to have now. Do not quarrel with that philosophy. Accept it. It is true. The only way to get something better is to out-grow this job. Any work is big that is done in a big way, if it be only sweeping the floor or washing windows. It is related that Count Tolstoi once said to a peasant whom he found plowing in a field: "My friend, if you knew that you were to die to-morrow, what would you do the rest of to-day?" "Why—why—I'd plow!" The answer of stupidity, you say? I am not so sure of that. How better could he spend the rest of his time than just plowing, for the world must be plowed?

Take hold right where you are, with the feeling that God needs you right there. And He does. If your past has been a failure, this will redeem it. If it has been successful, this will glorify it. When I was serving a church in Spokane, a young man came to our back door one evening just at dusk, and asked if there was any work I could give him to do. It was a few days before Christmas, and the air was full of frost and snow. I had no work

for him, but something in his face caught and held my sympathy. It was a handsome face, but at that moment it was full of a great tragedy. Yes, he was a "hobo"—not a tramp, you understand; there is a difference—one of hundreds of such men who could find no work during that terrible winter of 1914-15. This was on Saturday night. I gave him half a dollar, and my telephone number, and said, "Call me up on Monday morning, I may have a job for you." Monday morning early the telephone rang, and Jim—that was his name—was on the line. We were moving, and I gave him work. He worked for me several days off and on, as faithfully as time itself. I became much interested in him. On Christmas he ate dinner with us. The ladies of the parish had sent us a turkey, with all the trimmings, and this "hobo" was our only guest. After dinner he told me his story, straightforwardly and with no attempt at evasion or excuse. He had failed, and he knew why. Now he was going to begin again. "When I came to your door that night," he said, "I felt it was my last chance. I had walked all the afternoon, and could find neither work, money nor food. As I went up your steps, I said to myself, 'This is my last try. If I don't find something here, I give up.' It was robbery or the river, I didn't know which." But how that fellow did respond when he knew we trusted him!

I would give him the key to the house, tell him what to do, and go away and leave him to do it. In a little while the way opened for him to be employed in our church as janitor. The way he did his work was a delight to all our hearts. He kept it as clean as a lady's parlor. Of course we could not keep him, for he soon got a better place, at good wages, on a big ranch over in Montana.

That was the best fifty cents I ever invested. I verily believe it saved a soul. And Jim taught me a big lesson, the lesson of taking hold right where we are and flinging everything into the Now. Only by making to-day in all its fulness can we be assured of to-morrow. Nothing else will ever guarantee to-morrow.

"Away with the flimsy idea
 That life with a past is attended!
 There's Now, only Now, and no Past—
 There's never a Past, it is ended.
 Away with its absolute story
 And all of its yesterday's sorrow;
 There's only To-day, almost gone,
 And in front of To-day stands To-morrow!"

After I had preached to this theme one morning a friend handed me a card, upon which she had penciled the same sentiment in just seventeen words: "Yesterday is dead; forget it. To-morrow does not exist; do not worry. To-day is here; use it." My whole

sermon in seventeen words! It made me feel cheap.

Secondly, invest all your resources in the task of the moment. Fill to-day so full of interest, service and power that there will be neither time nor room to think of to-morrow. Anxious thought will then be impossible; for it is usually some neglect or failure of the present that causes anxiety for the future. The student who masters each day's lesson does not worry about examination day. To-day's duty lies right here. Do it. To-day's ministry beckons you to its service. Attend it gladly. To-day's love calls you to be embraced. Embrace it. To-day's food is here. Eat it with joy and thanksgiving. To-day's clothing is on your back and to-day's roof is over your head. Thankfully rest under them. To-day's friends and dear ones are about you. If you do not appreciate them to-day, what assurance have you that you ever will? Rejoice in them with all your heart. You mean to enjoy your dear ones sometime. Sometime, when you are not so busy, when you have made your fortune, when your business is on a firm foundation. Dear, foolish friend, you are losing the very heart of life. Now is the accepted time. Speak that word of love you have been postponing to a more convenient season. There will never be a more convenient season. Attend to it without a moment's de-

lay. It will do your soul good. The present is all you have. Invest everything in it. And unless you make the most of it, the future will be lame and blind and impotent.

In this manner we prove our faith in a fatherly God. The world has never yet dared step out boldly on the promises of God. Start where you are, and go as far as you can. When you get there, you will find that arrangements have already been made for getting you further. It never fails; the law always works. But we must do our part. I was standing on a down-town street-corner one day when a blind man came along, feeling his way carefully with his cane. When he reached the curb at the corner he stopped, stood still and waited. He was not impatient. He seemed to know what he wanted, and that he would get it in due season. And he was not disappointed. Some one approached him, spoke a word of inquiry, received an answer, then took the blind man by the arm and led him across the street. The fact that this person was myself adds meaning to the incident so far as I am concerned. The blind man knew I would be there at the corner when he needed me—I or some other. So he just came on his way *in faith*. Suppose he had refused to leave home, fearing that he would not be able to cross the street in the midst of the traffic? You would say he was foolish; that

some one would surely be there to help him. But in saying that do you not condemn yourself? Do you delay beginning some worthy work because you do not know how it may come out? If so, you have less faith than the blind man. Do it now! When you get to the corner you will find provision already made for getting you safely across. Have faith in the faithfulness of God who has promised. Do your part, and the future is safe in the heart of Being.

Thirdly, be whole-hearted about it and hold nothing back. Give all you have and are to the present hour and the present task. Invest heavily in to-day. Put God in your debt.

"Give to the world the best that you have,
And the best will come back to you."

That is much more than a pleasing bit of poetry. It is an axiom in the mathematics of the Divine. A friend of mine was once engaged in the work of demonstrating a food article in a big store, a task requiring considerable skill. One day a young woman, who said she was to take up the same line of work, came to the booth and asked to have the process explained. My friend told her everything she could, and showed her just how to do the difficult parts. That evening she related to another demonstrator what she had done,

and that other remarked: "Why, you silly goose! I wouldn't have told her a thing. You just talked yourself out of a job. Now she will probably get your place at lower wages." My friend told of the incident the next day, and was much worried about what the other demonstrator had said. I assured her that she had done just right; she had obeyed the spirit of the Golden Rule, and no harm could come. Still it troubled her. But a few days later the representative of her firm recommended her for a much better position, explaining that he was doing this because of her kindness to the young woman who wanted to get started in the same work. Now do not smile cynically, and say that such things never happen. They do, whenever given a chance.

"Where'er a noble deed is wrought,
Where'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts in glad surprise
To higher levels rise."

Hold nothing back. Emerson wisely admonishes us not to hold too much good in our hands; it will fast decay and "worm worms." I do not assert that mere money will always come back in this fashion. But this is not a matter of barter and trade. To give, expecting to receive again, is to lower the whole transaction to a sordid commercial basis. To do good merely for the sake of apprecia-

tion is to court disappointment. Do not even the publicans the same? The fundamental truth is that, when one gives all one has for the sake of the larger good, it always comes back in some sort of coin. You get the thing you want, or something better! The secret of it, if secret there be, is in holding nothing back for some better time or some greater opportunity. I used to hold out the best ideas and illustrations to use in "big" sermons on "big" occasions. It seemed too bad to use them at just ordinary times, mayhap on a rainy Sunday morning. Now I perceive that there is but one big occasion, and that is the present occasion. So I put the heart of all I have and know into each sermon as I go along. Nothing that is germane to the subject in hand is held out for a more convenient time. I just put it right in. The consequence is that the spring of inspiration never runs dry. In the seminary the young fellows used to ask what to do when the "sermon tank" was exhausted; and the professors would suggest many and divers expedients. But it isn't a tank at all! It is a living spring! And the only way to keep a never-failing supply of pure water on hand is to use it as fast as it pours in.

Study the great souls of the world, and learn that this is the secret of their greatness. They were wise enough to know that the

present is all we have. It is said that Judge Lindsey refused an offer of seventeen thousand dollars a year on the lecture platform to remain in Denver and continue his fight against the corrupt influences in that city. He knew that was the surest way to guarantee a future; and he had faith to believe that he would not need that money as long as he was attending to the duties of the hour. Agassiz, the great naturalist, refused to lecture for five hundred dollars a night. He said he was too busy to make money. Charles Sumner declined to lecture at any price, because, he said, as Senator from Massachusetts his time belonged to the state of Massachusetts. Charles Spurgeon refused to come to America to deliver fifty lectures at a thousand dollars a night. He said he could do better; he could stay in London and try to save fifty souls. Emerson steadfastly refused to increase his income beyond twelve hundred dollars a year, because he wanted his time to think.

Of course Elbert Hubbard said this is poor economics. But when History shall have handed down her merciless verdict, to such men as these will be given the prize of immortality. And the only secret is that they used the present *whole-heartedly, with faith, and without anxiety*. Nor did they lack any needful thing while they were doing it.

Much has been said about the poverty of

Jesus. Infinite changes have been rung on that saying that he had no place to lay his head. Let us be done with it. He said it to be sure; but not as a confession of poverty, but rather to discourage a would-be follower who was expecting immediate material rewards. Jesus never whined about poverty. Jesus never suffered poverty. He did not accumulate things, it is true. But I challenge any one to show me a word in the New Testament that indicates, or even hints, that Jesus ever was in want of any needful thing. He is indeed the supreme demonstration of his own faith and philosophy.

III. PERSONAL WITNESS

"Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself." In these words Jesus once anticipated the criticism of those who were seeking a discrepancy between preaching and practise. I imagine the same thought in your minds. I can almost hear you asking, "Do you mean to say that you are guided by this principle, that you always have been guided by it?" I reply in the words of Paul to the Philippians, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on."

Be it far from me to speak as if I had fully attained in anything! Like all of you, I am just a seeker and a learner, often stumbling

and blundering, a mixture of sinner and saint, of dirt and deity. I seek only to give you the benefit of the lessons as I have learned them. There have been times in my experience when, like Jacob of old, I have had to wrestle mightily in the dark hours of the night. But what seemed an evil antagonist has always proved, when daylight came, to be an angel of God. And I never let him go until he blest me! There has never been a time when I desired, above all things else, to demonstrate the truth that I have not been able to do it. "The utmost that one individual may do for another," says Horatio Dresser, "is to state the facts and laws of life *as he apprehends them.*" So all I can do, or any other teacher can do, is to tell you what I have found to be true in my own experience. Said Emerson, "Only that statement is fit to be made public which I have come at in attempting to satisfy my own curiosity." He does not use the word curiosity here in the usual vulgar sense. He means a divine thirst for knowledge; and when we understand that, we see that his statement is grandly true. I have tried to follow the principle. I teach nothing that I do not find true in my own experience. Moreover, I have ceased teaching as truth anything which I do not find capable of such verification.

So I can only say that to follow the admonition of the Master, "Be not therefore

anxious for the morrow," is to find one's self in harmonious co-operation with a principle of the universe. There have been times since I have been preaching when I even had to borrow a stamp to send a letter to my mother. There have been times when I did not know where the next month's rent was coming from. But the light has always come when it was needed, conditioned only upon my doing the thing at hand with all my heart and soul. Can I say more? There came into my church one morning a young woman, who I learned later was a widow with two small children dependent upon her. She had been earning a small salary as a proof-reader, enough to keep her little family together; but now the firm had gone out of business, and she was left without employment and without resources. She was in evident distress. I preached to the same text and theme we have to-day, little realizing that I was throwing out a life-line to one who was well-nigh submerged in the waters of despair. A few weeks later I met the young woman again, having in the meantime learned something of her circumstances, and she said to me: "That sermon solved my problem. It saved me from desperation, it helped me to find myself. I realized that I was in the care of an infinite God who is my Father. I took hold right where I was, and at once the path began to

clear before me. Now I am happier and more prosperous than ever. Keep on telling that message to the world, for I can bear witness that the principle always works."

Be not therefore anxious for the morrow!

In one way only can we heed this admonition with success and joy. Fill to-day full of wise purpose and loving service in that little corner right where you are. The to-morrow will always take care of itself. My great and good friend, Henry Victor Morgan, has put the heart of it all in his exquisite little poem of trust, entitled

To-Day

I sing not the songs of the olden,
Nor the splendor of things passed away;
My eyes from all beauty are holden
Save that which surrounds me To-day.

I dream not of distant to-morrows,
Of glory far down on life's way,
Nor fear I the oncoming sorrows—
My strength is enough for To-day.

No longer I ponder in sadness
O'er the sins of the dead yesterday;
But turn with a heart full of gladness
To the duty which lies in To-day.

The birds have no storehouse for treasure,
And yet they are happy alway;
And why should I need larger measure
Than the goodness which filleth To-day?

Still God in His garden is walking,
As in Eden so is He for aye;
In tempest and calm He is talking,
As I live with Him here in To-day.'

And, lo! glad angels are singing
To cheer me along on life's way;
My sweet human angels now living
And loving me here in To-day.

Thus I live in the great Ever-Present,
In its valleys forever I stray;
And I seek not ■ heaven far distant,
For it lieth around me To-day.*

*"Songs of Victory," by Henry Victor Morgan
Tacoma, Wash.

For individual practise and demonstration:

1. Take a good look at that everyday job of yours. Look at it from every possible angle, with a view to appreciating its social value and dignity. Do you really know of anything else in which you could be of greater service to the world just now?

2. Try this rather fascinating little game. Take pencil and paper. Write in one column a list of all the circumstances and conditions of your life of which you might fairly complain. In a parallel column make a list of all the conditions and circumstances that are good, and out of which you receive, or might receive, happiness and blessing. Now check them off, one against another, until one column is all used up. See on which side the balance falls.

3. In the light of the last two lessons, read again, slowly and carefully, the last part of the sixth chapter of Matthew, beginning with the nineteenth verse. See if it does not mean more to you than you ever dreamed before.

III

“JUDGE NOT”

1. BETRAYING OURSELVES

(Matt. 7 : 1-5)

THE PRAYER

We come this day, our Father, bringing to Thee our greatest problem: how to get on with one another. We are longing to know the secret of that most wonderful thing, the human heart, our own hearts and the hearts of our friends. We are longing to know how to refrain from unjust and unkindly judgments. We want to learn the secret of knowing and using the truth so that it shall prevail in our lives, so that it shall dispel error and establish peace. We hunger for that divine spirit which enables men to concede one another's sincerity, to believe in the essential honesty of human motives, however misguided they may be, and to think kindly of all men, however difficult the situation in which we may find ourselves. And for help to do all this we come to Thee, our Father, knowing well the hollowness and vanity of all earthly aid.

Our life here is but a complex of human relationships, from the least even unto the greatest of those things with which we have to do. Turn which way we will, we must deal with human souls. In the home, in the school, in the church, in business and in our social relaxations, we must deal with human souls in every degree of relationship. The problem of evil and sin is but the problem of wrong adjustments in

our dealings with one another. And the rule of love and the reign of righteousness, that which we pray for as Thy Kingdom, O God, must come and can come only through right adjustments in our human relationships.

We believe and are persuaded, dear Father, that there is but one spirit given among men that is able to solve this problem; and that is the spirit revealed and demonstrated in its beauty and power by Jesus, our Master and Leader. And our one and only prayer this day is that we may find grace to invoke that spirit, wisdom to yield ourselves as willing servants to it, and the ineffable joy of giving it possession of our lives. For this we have come hither into Thy house to-day. So help us, dear Father and Friend, that our coming may be both hallowed and blest.

In his name and for his sake,

AMEN.

LESSON THREE

1. BETRAYING OURSELVES

It has been said that a man can not open his mouth without judging himself. And this is true. A man classifies himself every time he expresses an opinion or formulates a creed. His political affiliations, his religious sympathies, his activity or non-activity along the lines of social amelioration or betterment, all put a stamp upon him as plain as noonday to one who has eyes to see.

Emerson stated it well, when he said: "Human character does evermore publish itself. It will not be concealed. It hates darkness, it rushes into the light. The most fugitive deed and word, the mere air of doing a thing, the intimated purpose, expresses character." And this is never more evident than when we sit in judgment upon one another. Nothing more clearly reveals "the man within."

I. THE SPIRIT OF IT

Jesus went straight to the heart of this matter when he said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, *ye shall be judged.*"

He is speaking here of the spirit which is behind all words and actions, and the saying must be interpreted accordingly. Jesus does not mean to say that some regularly constituted court of law, or even the court of public opinion, will always pass upon you the identical judgment that you pass upon another. He just means that the judgment you render upon a brother man or sister woman is an infallible index to *your own spirit*. It reveals unerringly *your* state of mind and *your* attitude of soul. And by that you pass judgment upon yourself.

Jesus always bases his teachings upon the spirit of human action rather than upon specific human acts. This is what makes him the greatest of teachers. In the words of one of his biographers, "He knew what was in man." Take, for illustration, his teachings concerning murder. The man who is angry with his brother is as much in danger of judgment as is the man who has already taken his brother's life. Why? Because the germ of murder lies in anger; a germ first conceived in the passionate spirit of the heart. In that true sense, how many of us are wholly guiltless of murder? Who among us has never been angry with a brother? According to this same keen analyzer of human motives, the adulterer is not only the individual who is guilty of the overt physical act, but any one

who has entertained an impure thought with reference to one of the opposite sex. On that basis, how many are wholly guiltless of this offense?

Conversely, those who pray loudly in public, to be seen and heard of men, are guilty not of a sin of commission but of a sin of omission. They pretend to pray, but it is not prayer. It is just saying prayers! There is a difference. There is no prayer in the heart, no spirit of reverence, or thanksgiving, or supplication, without which true prayer is impossible. That is why Jesus declares that the publican, who would not so much as lift up his face to heaven, but smote his breast, and cried, "God, be thou merciful to me, a sinner," was justified, rather than the Pharisee, who was content with merely cataloguing his virtues—not that Deity might know, but that those who chanced to be standing by might be duly impressed with his piety.

Jesus deals only with the motives of human action, "the spirit within the wheels," that runs the whole human machine. We must learn his method if we are to comprehend and follow his example. Instead of looking sympathetically into the hearts of men, as he did, we are too apt to "judge after the outward appearance." To look into the heart of a brother, however erring, and then comprehendingly back into one's own heart, is to

refrain from judgment—and that is Christian. But to note just what has been said or done, with no endeavor to understand, imputing the worst and basest of motives to it, is to sit in constant judgment—and that is pagan. But, whichever we do—and this is the point to be emphasized—we always betray the spirit of our own hearts.

II. THE BASIS OF IT

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.”

To-day I shall do nothing more than endeavor to discover the basis upon which the truth, the philosophy, of this saying rests. And, when we have laid it bare, I believe you will agree with me that this philosophical basis is quite impregnable. There are four aphorisms which seem to state it all very pungently. Let them stand as the four cornerstones of this foundation, if you will.

The first one is this: *Each and every person is at this moment just what he must be.*

Take this literally, if you please. You and I, all of us, and all men everywhere, are exactly as we had to be, in view of all that has gone before. I am the sum total of all the forces that have had a part in shaping my life. True, if those forces had been different, I would have been different. But those forces were

not different. They were just as they were. Consequently, I am just what I am. I could not possibly be other than I am.

But there is peril in that thought, if we do not get all its implications. I would have you be on your guard just here, lest you fall into that cast-iron fatalism which would make man a mere puppet in the hands of external forces.

When I speak of the forces which have had to do in shaping our lives as we are to-day, I do not mean to imply that they were either blind forces or forces over which we had no control. Indeed, quite to the contrary! We may have just drifted before them; or we may have consciously given them their direction. A man's own attitude in the face of his circumstances is one of the forces, *and the greatest single force*, entering into the process of making him what he is. One man lives a life of usefulness and success in the world, but his brother, born of the same parents and reared in the same environment, becomes a drunken sot. The vital difference would seem to be something in the men themselves, in the exercise of their power of moral choice. And each man's choice becomes one of the forces which make him what he is.

One need not be a fatalist, in the sense that he denies the doctrine of free moral agency, to accept the dictum I have just laid

down. Each and every person is *at this moment* just what he must be.

In his best-known book, "The Psychic Treatment of Nervous Disorders," Dr. Paul Dubois, one of the pioneers of the modern school of psychology and mental therapy, has this pregnant sentence: "I know of no idea more fertile in happy suggestion than that which consists in taking people as they are, and admitting at the same time when one observes them that they are never otherwise than what they can be." There it is in a nutshell! People may be good, bad or indifferent. But at the moment you observe them, they are never otherwise than what they can be. Wise old Cervantes was in pursuit of the same idea when he said, in "Don Quixote," "Every man is as Heaven made him, and sometimes a great deal worse."

I was sitting in the reading-room of a public library one day trying to run down a knotty point of theology. Becoming aware that some one had taken the seat by my side, I glanced up to see what manner of man my neighbor might be. He was a big, florid, robust young fellow, with a pimply face and square, pugnacious jaws. The book he had secured was "The Art and Science of Pugilism," and he seemed quite as much interested in his reading as I was in mine. There we were, the two of us: one studying theology, the

other pugilism. Any man who would have expected to gain our equal interest by approaching us from the same angle would have been equally foolish to quarrel with the fact that each of us was just as he was. Each was just as he had to be, in view of all that had gone before in the life of each.

Each and every person is at this moment just as he must be. Apply that dictum always and everywhere in your dealings with men. Apply it to the prisoner at the bar, charged with murder. Apply it to the twelve men in the jury-box, who will determine his guilt or innocence. Apply it to the judge on the bench, who will impose sentence upon him. Apply it to the person who may have done you some great wrong. Apply it to the head of the state. Apply it to yourself. Then apply it habitually in your endeavor to understand what Jesus meant, when he said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." I think I can promise that you will find it very helpful.

The second aphorism which I submit for your consideration is this: *Each and every person is on a mental and spiritual plane of his own.*

Life has often been made graphic by the figure of a ladder, with a succession of rungs leading up from the bottom into invisible space. The figure is a good one. Upon each one of these rungs, which are in-

finite in number, stands a human soul. The height to which that soul has ascended is determined by the several forces which have come into his life, and the direction which he himself has given those forces, and his mastery over them. There are other souls all about him. Some are higher and some lower. Some are separated by the smallest of degrees. Yet the plane he holds is his own, and no other can stand upon it.

If you doubt the truth of this statement, apply it to yourself. Do you know of any one who you really believe occupies *exactly* the same plane of mental and spiritual consciousness that you do? Any one at all, anywhere? Do you know of any one who you are sure could be depended upon to understand you perfectly *in all possible circumstances*? Any one who could render an absolutely just and fair judgment upon you in any conceivable situation? You may have a friend, "a pal," from whom you have no secrets, and in whose presence you feel that you could safely "think out loud." Can you imagine any situation or combination of circumstances in which even that friend might not be able to understand you *quite*?

In this connection I recall an epoch in my own life. In my high school days I had two friends. I was constantly in the company of one or both of them. We had no

secret thoughts or ambitions; or, at least, we supposed we had not. Every desire and ideal of one seemed to be equally shared by both the others. One of these boys was tall and slender, the other was short and thick, while I was kind of betwixt and between. And if any one, something over twenty-five years ago, had intimated to me that our friendship might some day lose its warmth and joy, I would have maintained that it was impossible.

But after commencement our paths diverged. And almost immediately I became aware that there were heights and depths in each soul of the three which the others had never ascended or plumbed. Neither of those boys had ever really known me. I became absorbed in preparation for what was to be my life work; one of the boys went on to a university; and the other went into business. For a year we corresponded regularly, and the old ties apparently held fast. But after that they began very perceptibly to loosen. We met only at long intervals; and when we did meet each was conscious of a certain awkwardness, a certain restraint. At least I know I felt it, though at the time I could not understand why, and reproached myself roundly for what seemed like a kind of faithlessness. Both of those young men—I always think of them as young men—are now engaged in business. I am told that the tall one has grown

fat and the short one lean, and that both are getting rich. I am neither fat nor lean; and, as for getting rich—well—! But to all intents and purposes we three are strangers. For the sake of old times, I should be glad to meet them again. But I know that the old friendship, in the old way, is quite impossible. It is dust and ashes, and will be forever. We dwell on planes as widely separated as the miles between us. And now I know that we never did quite understand one another.

Each and every person is on a mental and spiritual plane of his own; a plane determined by all those forces of which we were speaking a moment ago, and which make him what he is. Yes, it is a hard saying. But as you ponder upon it you will more and more perceive its truth. And I ask you to take this, too, into consideration in thinking of those words of Jesus, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

The third aphorism naturally follows: *Each and every person reveals his plane of life to those who have eyes to see.*

Again let me make the point clear by illustration. Strabo, of Pontus, the ancient geographer, tells an amusing story of a musician who was pouring forth his melodies in the market-place, thinking he was holding his big audience spell-bound. But in the midst of his playing the market-bell rang, and

all but one hurried away. The musician complimented his solitary listener on having a soul above mere merchandise. The fellow cupped his hand behind his ear. "Master, I am hard of hearing. Did you say the market-bell had rung?" "Yes." "Then I must be off." And off he went. Not one of that audience needed to say a word to reveal that he was not living on a high plane of musical appreciation.

In a little Indiana village a few years ago I met an interesting character. He had been a doctor, but of what school I could not learn. Just before I met him he had joined a "holiness band," and had given up his medical practise. When I asked him why he had done this, he replied, "Because no man can doctor and be a Christian." How much was that opinion worth? Exactly nothing, as proving anything about the practise of medicine generally; but considerable, as revealing the inside of that man's own mind. It just proved to me that he had been a fake, a fraud or a dupe in his own practise. Else why abandon it when he became a Christian?

You often hear the saying quoted, "Every man has his price." And every one who quotes it, as his own sentiment, betrays the fact that *he* has *his* price. Otherwise what reason has he to suppose that other men have theirs? There is an amusing story of a preacher who had been elected to the legislature. When

the session was about half over, he suddenly resigned his office and came home. When asked by his constituents the reason for this peculiar action, he replied: "Well, you know they say every man has his price. The fact is, they were getting too close to mine!" Did he betray anything about himself? In such a case, discretion was no doubt the better part of valor. I once heard a somewhat celebrated doctor of divinity declare, "The doctrine of infinite progression is an infinite absurdity." Does that tell you anything about the plane of spiritual understanding to which that worthy man had attained? He could not have betrayed his ignorance more glaringly in a dozen sermons. He was not only ignorant of a great and wonderful philosophy, he was intolerant of it. All this is revealed in his one brief statement.

A certain judge of the superior court in Chicago gave an address in which he ridiculed those students of criminology who maintain that most crime is due either to mental defect or social maladministration. He said it would be difficult to find a body of men and women anywhere with more active and intelligent minds than those in the county jails; that too much sympathy has been wasted upon the woman of the streets; that she is ignorant and "down and out" simply because she is too lazy to acquire an education; that it is high time

to stop coddling criminals, and go back to the old-time stern and inflexible methods of punishment. Never mind just now the merits of his argument. That is not the point. It is the man who is making the argument that we are interested in. What does he tell you, without directly mentioning it, about his judicial temperament? He is a good natural prosecutor, but a poor judge. An Indianapolis judge of the criminal court once remarked, and with considerable heat, that he would do anything in his power to send a certain accused person to the penitentiary for a long term of years. And that person had not even been brought to trial! Do not both of these gentlemen show themselves to be temperamentally unfit to be on the bench? They are natural prosecutors. How would you like to have your case tried by one who is prejudiced against *all accused persons*? He who states opinions in such a sweeping, dogmatic fashion is always prejudiced. In fact, all mere opinion is usually nothing but prejudice.

So indiscriminate judgment against men and classes of men always betrays the spirit of him who renders it. It indicates clearly his plane of spiritual understanding, and his degree of spiritual sympathy. That plane is the bench upon which he sits when passing such judgment, and he can not hide it if he would. Hence the truth of our third aphorism.

Each and every person reveals his plane of life to those who have eyes to see. Try that on yourself, too, if you are still in doubt. And never fail to remember it in pondering the saying of Jesus, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Now the fourth aphorism is really a conclusion based upon the other three: *Just judgment is always impossible because of the different planes upon which we are living.*

By just judgment I mean that which is arrived at with knowledge of all the facts and circumstances of the case, and after due consideration has been given them. But all the facts and circumstances can never be known, even in the simplest cases. Moreover, we do not usually suspend judgment long enough to search them out. I was preaching one night in a city in Ohio when I noticed in the congregation a man of very untidy appearance. His face was none too clean, his tie was in disorder, his vest was buttoned only at the top. I confess I was annoyed, half unconsciously of course, as he seemed to be a man of more than average intelligence. I felt that he owed it not only to himself but to others to make himself more presentable. At the close of the meeting I stood at the door, as is my habit, to speak to the people as they passed out. As this man came along I reached out to shake hands with him, but observed,

with a shudder, that he had no hands. Just a pair of stumps! Both members had been cut off in an accident. If I ever prayed to be forgiven it was then. And I always think of that now when I am tempted to form hasty judgments. Perhaps I do not know all the circumstances.

But suppose all the facts of the case could be known. Could another, living upon a different plane of consciousness, fairly pass judgment upon them? Manifestly not. Those on a higher plane will do the only possible thing; they will refrain from judgment altogether. Those on a lower plane will betray by their judgment that they are on a lower plane! Hence the true philosophy of the Master's word is established out of the mouth of two witnesses. Those above will not judge, because they know they can not. Those below, by judging will betray and condemn themselves. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."

In his letter to the Romans, Paul puts this in slightly different words, where he says, "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, *thou condemnest thyself*; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things." He does not mean that those who judge others always commit the identical offenses for which others have

been condemned. He means that the simple fact that one has arrived at a certain conclusion concerning a certain act proves that that person has passed through *in his own thought* all the steps leading up to the commission of the act. Then, to judge another for an act is to admit one's self, in thought at least, capable of doing the same thing, *and understanding why!* Now we comprehend better what Jesus meant in the text. Now we comprehend better that other saying of Paul that Love, which is the fulfilling of the law, "taketh not account of evil."

Here, then, is the intellectual basis upon which this revolutionary teaching rests. To suppose, as so many do, that the philosophy of Jesus does not meet the intellectual needs of man is to shoot wide of the mark. In some respects it may be beyond our present intellectual apprehension, but *never beneath it*.

So consider these four simple aphorisms again. They are simple indeed, but with a profundity which has never been fully plumbed.

Each and every person is at this moment just as he must be.

Each and every person lives on a mental and spiritual plane of his own.

Each and every person reveals his plane of life to those who have eyes to see.

Therefore, just judgment is always im-

possible, because of the different planes upon which we are living.

Take these aphorisms, I say, and be guided by their light in your endeavor to obey the word of the Master, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." You will find that both they and the word itself, which rests upon them, are beyond challenge by the keenest mind that lives. And when, to this crystal-clear intellectualism is added that wisdom of the Spirit with which Jesus makes everything incandescent with the white light of the Divine, man can do nothing less than surrender. The power of Jesus was far more than that of a trained logician who was able, with a question or pointed retort, to confound the most adroit controversialists his foes could pit against him. He added to this sharpness of wit that indescribable witness of the Spirit which is both light and heat, and in the face of which even the officers who had been sent to arrest him returned empty-handed, saying, "Never man spake like this man."

And his gospel is the only hope of a world made mad by hatred and embittered with the poison of hasty and unjust judgments. On my study wall hangs a miniature picture of his face, as it appears in Hofmann's celebrated painting, "Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler." A friend tinted it and sent it to me one Christmas time. Perhaps nothing I have ever re-

ceived has been more helpful to me. When I am tired and worn I like to look at it; it rests me. When my faith wavers I like to look at it; it strengthens me. When sullen moods come over me, as they sometimes do, when the bitterness of harsh judgments and the smart of injustice bite like salt in a fresh wound, then I like to sit down quietly before that wonderful Face. It is a sorrowful Face, yet full of a strange peace. It is a Face full of yearning, and ready to weep at the blind folly of the rich young ruler, yet a Face incandescent with the whiteness of a soul too full of sympathy and understanding even to condemn him for his blindness. I look at that Face, and am still. And presently the sun breaks through, the clouds roll away, and all the earth smiles again with the visible presence of God.

“I do not ask God’s face to see—
Enough His garment now for me.
The sunset clouds with love aglow
I watch—I dream—deep, deep I know
Behind the cloud a glory stands—
At times I see the Painter’s hands
Across the heavens a glory trace.
I rest content—I wait in peace;
Love knows, when I have inward grace,
I then shall see and know His face.”*

*From “Songs of Victory,” by Henry Victor Morgan.

For individual practise and demonstration:

1. Read Emerson's essay on Compensation. Observe how his argument is based upon the same philosophy we have been expounding in this lesson.

2. Run back over the experiences of your own life, those which you feel have exerted a powerful influence upon your circumstances. Were any of them within your own control? Were any of them such that you were wholly helpless in their grasp? Is it in your power to affect their influence even yet?

3. Do you know of any case, outside of your own individual life, in which you have a sufficient knowledge of all the circumstances to enable you to render an absolutely fair and unbiased judgment?

4. Did Jesus ever fail to live up to his own teaching in this text?

III

“JUDGE NOT”

2. DEALING WITH OURSELVES

(Matt. 7 : 1-5)

THE PRAYER

With great joy, dear Father, we welcome the return of this hour of common worship. It is good indeed to pause now and again in the hurry of our troubled lives to rest and refresh our souls, and to purify and renew our spirits by meditation upon things which are eternal. It is good to hear in the hidden places of our hearts the accents of that still, small Voice; and good to answer back again the deepest longings of our natures. In this place of holy memory it is easy to yield ourselves to noble impulses, easy to cast off the shackles of things which are of the earth earthy, easy to obey the promptings of the divinity within.

Our prayer this day, dear Father, is for courage to look deeply and searchingly into our own hearts—for out of the heart are the issues of life. May we be brave enough to see ourselves as we really are, brave enough to analyze the motives that control us, brave enough to face all the forces at work within, acknowledging their power for good or evil. We are wont to pray for the coming of Thy kingdom; but until the citadel of our own hearts is taken, Thy kingdom can not come. We are wont to pray for Thy will to be done in the earth; but except Thy will reign in these hearts of ours, all our petitions

are in vain. So we ask Thee, O God, for grace to deal sternly with ourselves this day. Make us brave to face this question: Am I helping Thy kingdom or hindering it?—to face this question and answer it with manly courage.

Above all, dear Father, save us from all bitterness and meanness of spirit. In every ordeal of our human life give us of the spirit of Jesus, that our hearts may be kept wholesome and sweet. Help us to guard our lips, that no thoughtless or unkind word may be spoken. Redeem us from the spirit of harsh judgment and condemnation. May we hold no grudge against a brother man or a sister woman. May we forgive one another, as we hope to find forgiveness in Thy sight. Renew our courage for what the future holds in store. Establish our hearts and confirm our spirits in all things which make life unselfish and strong.

In the spirit of the Master.

AMEN.

LESSON THREE

2. DEALING WITH OURSELVES

There is a certain trait in our human nature which is sometimes a considerable tax upon one's patience. We are all very fond of shooting at long range. On every street corner, in mild weather, may be found patriots who know to the fraction of an inch just how the national government ought to be run, patriots who have never been able decently to support their own families. Hundreds of men, ninety per cent of whom habitually quarrel with their own wives, can tell you just how to liquidate the war debt and put over the League of Nations. The country is full of well-meaning persons who believe that, if our missionary offerings were only large enough, the world would soon be Christianized. Yet the keen Japanese, the observing Chinese and the sage Hindus who come to our shores shake their heads doubtfully as they study the workings of our so-called Christian civilization. And nothing is commoner than to discover among those who have quite lost control of their own children, or who never had any children of their own, the budding genius who hankers to tell the teacher just

how to enforce discipline. Nor must we forget that a great many treatises on success have been written by men who never succeeded.

Now this is not to condemn long-range shooting. It is rather to call attention to the fact that, when the range becomes real short, we find our aim is poor from lack of target practise. Rifles, as well as twelve-inch guns, are needed; and usually it is the rifles that clinch the argument. I would be the last to deny to the street-corner patriot his inalienable right to criticise the government at Washington. The suppression of that right is always a colossal blunder. But I would give much more consideration to his opinions if he were entirely self-supporting. Let no one think for a moment that I am opposed to foreign missions, for I am not. But until we ourselves become more nearly Christian, I shall always have a haunting suspicion that our contributions should be accompanied by a letter of apology. It would be cruel to take away from those childless critics the joy of laying down the law to the populous household across the street; but really nobody pays any attention to what they say, and for very obvious reasons. Without doubt a man who has failed can say worth while things about success; but when we know he has failed, we almost unconsciously discount his testimony.

So let us do most of our shooting at short range. Let us begin with ourselves. Let us help solve the problems of the nation by giving strict attention to our personal problems. Without forgetting our brothers beyond the seas, let us strive to make the world Christian by Christianizing first our own churches and communities, beginning with our own pews and our own households. I have no faith in any method which omits this important detail. We have heard of ministers who think the way to make themselves popular and their churches strong is to join all the clubs and lodges in town. But not many succeed in that way. Of course all these long-range methods are not to be omitted or despised. They have their uses. But let us get a sane equilibrium. "These things ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone."

And this brings us right down to the business of the lesson. Our theme proposes that we shall obey the Master's injunction, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," by confining our fault-finding and condemnation quite strictly to ourselves.

First let us recall to mind the discussion of the last lesson. At that time we studied the intellectual basis of this principle, rightly believing that a man's intellect must be satisfied before he will commit himself wholly to

any proposition; and believing, moreover, that the philosophy of Jesus contains all the elements of such satisfaction. Let me remind you again of the four aphorisms upon which that intellectual basis stands:

Each and every person is at this moment just what he must be.

Each and every person lives on a mental and spiritual plane of his own.

Each and every person reveals his plane of life to those who have eyes to see.

Just judgment is therefore impossible because of the different planes on which we live.

We shall not take time now to review the argument for the truth of these statements. But the conclusion at which we arrive in the last one of the four is to furnish our starting-point for to-day:

Just because we do live on different intellectual and spiritual planes, we can not justly judge one another; therefore, in applying this great injunction, we must deal only with ourselves.

I. AN IMPORTANT POINT

But first let us consider a very practical objection which some one will be sure to raise. Is it meant that we must do away with all judgment in a legal sense? Shall we not have courts, and officers to judge and pass sentence upon offenders?

The objection is answered in a sentence.

Jesus uses the word judgment in the sense of *moral condemnation only*. Until our civilization actually becomes Christian in spirit, we shall have need of courts and judges and judicial sentences. But condemnation of an accused person is no proper part of a judge's function. His business and his duty are to fix the penalty, after the jury has decided that the accused has actually committed the crime charged in the indictment. And if, in the meantime, all the rest of us will refrain from harsh judgment and condemnation, I am willing to guarantee the justice of the judge's findings in every instance!

We do not permit our courts to be just and impartial. We demand, through the newspapers, and through our social and political affiliations, that certain persons shall be convicted and certain others set free. And too often our choice is not Christ but Barabbas. The judge who can stand firm in the face of such sinister influences must be a man of sterling moral integrity and an exalted sense of duty. Shame on us that we ever seek to tie his hands! Let us give our judges a fair chance to be just.

In his epoch-making book, "Society and Prisons," Thomas Mott Osborne, the man who worked such wonders at Auburn and Sing Sing, pleads for just such a state of

things as I have suggested. He would have the function of our courts limited strictly to the determination of *the facts only*. I quote:

“Let there be no attempt to determine motives. When a deed of violence is done, so far as society is concerned it makes no difference what is the motive. . . . What society is really interested in is to get the murderer removed to a place of safety where he can not continue to murder.”

Then, when the jury has decided that the crime has been committed as charged, no matter what the motive, Mr. Osborne would have the judge address the prisoner in some such fashion as this:

“Friend and brother, it has been determined by an unprejudiced tribunal of your fellow men that you have done this thing. As to your intentions, we do not presume to judge; as to your motives, they can be known only to yourself and God; as for your act, it makes no difference what it was so long as it is dangerous to society. You are an impediment to its onward march; you are out of gear with its intricate machinery. Your relations with God we leave with God, for we neither grade your crime nor brand any man as a criminal. Your relations with society, society has a right to regulate; and society decrees that you remain in exile from it until you have shown by your conduct that you are fit to return to it. Every help will be given you, every incentive will be offered you to learn your lesson. Then, when you have learned it—be that time long or short—society will welcome you back again to its midst. It will not turn its back

upon you, because your very return will show that you have worked out your own salvation—that from the bitterness of experience you have learned the truth that you would not or could not learn without it. Friend and brother, until that time comes, farewell, and may God be with you.”

Verily I say unto you, here speaketh the voice of a prophet. And our courts will be set free to perform this saving ministry only when we have learned to obey the word of the Master and refrain from all harsh judgment and condemnation. Instead of sitting in cheap judgment upon those who have committed crime, let us rather turn our attention to the social causes of crime. Sit in judgment, if you will, upon those forces which produce criminals; but have a care how you condemn the individual victims of those forces. Too long have we mistaken cause for effect; too long have we broken upon the rack of public execration the pitiable victims of our own ignorance, indifference and neglect.

II. A MAN'S-SIZE JOB

But now to our specific task, the method of dealing with ourselves.

You will remember the parable of the mote and the beam. This is an example of that kind of argument, much used by Orientals, in which a contrast is made very sharp by what is known in rhetoric as exaggeration.

In this parable Jesus is suggesting in a half-humorous, half-bantering way, that we have such a big job at home looking after ourselves that there is really no time left for judging other people. How can any one, he asks, with a great beam sticking in his own eye, see clearly to remove a mote from his brother's eye?

Observe how striking the contrast is. The Greek word which is here translated beam, means literally a joiner's beam, used in the framework of houses; while the word translated mote is literally a *dry fragment of straw*, such as might blow into one's eye on a windy day. The force of the question, in modern phraseology, is this: How can a man with a two-by-six in his own eye see well enough to wipe a bit of chaff out of some one else's eye?

"Keep your own dooryard clean," is a proverb we learned in childhood. And we observed that those who did this were usually so well employed that they did not criticize their neighbors' yards too severely. They had a man's-size job on their hands at home. Moreover, that was the very best way to help clean up their neighbors' yards, as we shall see a little later.

The aboriginal Australians used a peculiar weapon called a boomerang. It was made of hard wood, so shaped and curved that, when

thrown in a certain manner, it moved forward about forty yards, then turned and gyrated and traveled backward, and struck behind or near the thrower. Hence we have grown to speak of any statement or proceeding that recoils upon its originator as a boomerang.

Now any one who studies this question carefully, and with reference to his own experience, soon discovers that judgment always acts as a boomerang. Judgment always reacts upon him who judges, and with the exactness of a mathematical formula. Your words, kind or unkind, just or unjust, like the chickens, always come home to roost. Impute evil to another, even in thought, and your own mind and heart must be soiled with it. But be careful to understand that by judgment in this connection I mean *moral condemnation*.

This boomerang comes back in various ways. Sometimes it comes in the form of physical illness. Half of the shattered nerves, half of the phobias and insanities, half even of the functional disorders of men, are the direct result of the bitterness and madness of mind which always accompany harsh judgment and condemnation of others. Any specialist on nervous disorders will endorse that statement. If all the hatreds and quarrels and misunderstandings between us were cleared up, *all* of the sanitariums, *most* of the

asylums, and *half* of the doctors could go immediately out of business; while fully *two-thirds* of the preachers would have to revise their methods and reinterpret their doctrines or seek other fields of activity.

Analyze your own sicknesses, distresses and fears. How many of them have grown out of personal misunderstandings, or have been aggravated by them—misunderstandings in which the spirit of harsh judgment has had a large place? After hearing an exposition of this theme on a certain occasion, a woman came to me and said she was going straight home and write a letter to her brother from whom she had become estranged concerning some property. The situation had sickened her in body and mind. Now she understood why, and was going to take the cure. Now she was going to write to her brother in the spirit of love and conciliation, without reference to that which had estranged them, believing that he would respond to that spirit in herself. Perhaps some member of your family or household is out of harmony with you. Unkind words have been spoken. Your feelings have been hurt, and you have said to yourself, "That was a mean thing for him to do, and I just hate him for it. I'll get even somehow." What has been the reflex upon your physical being? Hasn't it made you miserable? Are not your nerves in a state

of tension? Doesn't your food lie like lead in your stomach, refusing to be assimilated?

What is the matter? The boomerang which you threw is coming back, that's all. You may say that you were not at fault in the matter. You may not have provoked the quarrel, to be sure. But you reacted to the provocation *in the same spirit*. There is where *your* fault lies. And the result of it is seen in your feeling of bitterness against that other. That bitterness has tensed your nerves, hindered your digestion, and thrown your whole life out of gear. You are utterly miserable. And that condition will be maintained in some degree until, through reconciliation, you get rid of your spiritual bitterness.

Judgment always acts as a boomerang. Nearly three thousand years ago, Lycurgus, the wise law-giver of Sparta, was asked whether a man who did a wrong could ever escape the notice of the gods. "No," he replied, "not even if he thinks wrong." And judgment, in the spirit of condemnation, is invariably the result of a wrong way of thinking.

One point we emphasized in the last lesson was that a man's own attitude in the face of his circumstances is the greatest single factor which enters into the making of his character. Let us enlarge that idea by saying that a man's own attitude in the face of

any situation is the only element of that situation for which he is personally responsible. I remember an interesting debate on this question in a little meeting of students once upon a time. This query was proposed: Am I responsible for the attitude which my neighbor holds toward me? After some talk it was agreed that I am not; but that I *am* responsible for the attitude which I hold toward my neighbor. Is it not so? For is it not true that the only power I have of changing our present relationship consists in my power to change my attitude toward him? I can not break into his mind, and change his opinions willy-nilly. But, by the grace of God, I can change my own! And my own feelings and opinions are all I am responsible for. That is what the woman did in writing to the brother who was estranged. She just changed her own attitude. That is all she could do. The rest was up to him.

So put this down as a universal rule, a rule to which there are no exceptions. "I judge no man," said Jesus; "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." By assuming toward men the attitude of a Savior rather than a judge, Jesus is drawing all men unto him. And the more conscious they are of sin in their own hearts the more eagerly they come; because they see in him not a judge but a sympathizing and under-

standing Savior. Jesus never condemned any one. He would not even pronounce any one deserving of the penalties provided by law. He refused to interfere in the case of the two brothers who were quarreling over the division of their father's estate. But I can easily believe that, after their talk with him, they were able to settle it amicably between themselves. You remember his attitude toward the sinful woman. There was no question of her guilt, so far as the overt act was concerned. The mob had a double purpose in dragging her before him. They would get him to pronounce her worthy of death, which was their primary purpose at the moment. Thus he would, in effect, repudiate his own principles and precepts, which was their secondary purpose. To-day we would speak of it as "a frame up." They did not bring the man, you observe, the man who was equally guilty. That little detail makes the case almost modern.

And you remember how the trial proceeded. It was quite the strangest court procedure on record. The prosecution stated its case. The defendant was guilty, no doubt about that. The evidence was so overwhelming that she was not even asked to plead to the indictment. The penalty, they said, was death by stoning, so written in the law of Moses. And they had come prepared to execute it instantanly. Everybody had his

hands and arms full of stones. "What sayest thou of her, Master?" It was a dramatic moment. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote upon the ground—the only reference we find anywhere to his ever having written anything. They pressed him for an answer, and he paused long enough to say, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And he went on with his writing. There may have been no legal precedent for it, but he had over-ruled the motion to convict.

But something unusual was taking place in the court. The audience, which was also jury, was dwindling. One by one, beginning with the oldest, they slunk away; and Jesus was left alone with the woman crouching at his feet. "Woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee?" "No man, Master." "Neither do I condemn thee. Go thy way; from henceforth sin no more." And instead of a lump of quivering flesh, from which the life had been beaten out by the hands of men as guilty as herself, a living soul went out into a new life; for I do not conceive it possible that she was guilty again of a like offense.

Now there are two points to be noted here. Jesus acted upon his unvarying principle, and refused to pass judgment upon the woman, scarlet though she was. And he got all her accusers *busy with themselves*. Each

man's conscience told him that, if the sentence against her awaited a guiltless person to execute it, it would remain unexecuted forever. They were ashamed to look anybody in the face, and slunk away one by one. And I dare go so far as to say this: If all of us would for a little time hold toward all the world the attitude which Jesus held toward that sinning, suffering woman, such an atmosphere would be created in our human society that any offense against the perfect law of love would become morally impossible.

Let us deal firmly with ourselves. That will give us plenty to do; and our decisions in that case will be fairly just, too. It is only when we are being attacked or hounded that we seek to justify ourselves in our wrong attitudes. When it is left to our own unforced sense of justice, we are very much like the small boy who had been promised a dollar if he would be good for a whole day. When the time came for payment, the friend who had made the offer said: "Now I shall not ask anybody how you have behaved. I want you to tell me yourself. Do you deserve the dollar or not?" The little fellow was silent a moment, scratched his head, frowned, and finally said in a subdued voice, "Jest gimme a nickel." He had been only about five per cent efficient, and was willing to admit it. And we all admit it when we deal candidly with ourselves.

Whenever I see a wrong condition in society, whenever I know of a crime having been committed, whenever I see a misguided soul, the question weighs heavily upon me: "What have *I* done, or what have *I* not done, that this is so? What can *I* do to prevent its repetition? How have *I* failed?" Nothing is easier than to condemn another who has been overtaken in a fault. But it requires a bit of real moral courage to acknowledge a part of the responsibility for it. And that responsibility consists in our failure to live up to the highest standard we know. In that respect are we all sinners.

III. HOW TO CRITICIZE

There is another point which must be met before we are done with the lesson. There are many important points, indeed, but this one is imperative. Would not obeying this principle make all criticism impossible? And, in that case, how should we be able to point out faults and correct them?

A few years ago two friends of mine, a husband and wife, took a little child from the slums into their home for several months. It was a fine home in which all the niceties of culture and good breeding were observed. The child, on the other hand, was ignorant of all the social graces. Of course she knew nothing of table manners, not even how to

use a knife and fork properly. But she was a bright little thing, about five years old, and alert to learn the ways of her new environment. My friends did not attempt to instruct her in words, but they were particularly careful at table to do the proper thing themselves. The youngster watched them keenly, and imitated their actions. She used the kind of fork they used; when they used a spoon she used her spoon; she spread her napkin just as they spread theirs. In a short time, any one seeing the child at meals would have supposed she was to the manor born.

Now this is an illustration of what some one has called "criticism by creation." It consists in doing the thing we think others ought to do, instead of merely finding fault with their failure to do it. It is positive instead of negative in its method. It is the only method that marks progress, and the only method that succeeds in the end. Whatever other devices it may seem expedient at times to use, this method must predominate if we would be guided by the spirit of Jesus. The misdeeds of others I have no right to criticize, unless I am endeavoring to live the right kind of life myself. And that kind of life is in itself usually a sufficient criticism.

In other words, criticize a wrong thing by putting a better in its place. Criticize your friend's ill temper by keeping your own

spirit sweet. Criticize lying by telling and living the truth. Criticize hatred by manifesting love. Criticize doubt by living faith. It is precisely the method to be employed in meeting evil of any kind; that of displacing it by the truth of which it is a negation, as you get rid of the darkness by turning on the light. And this, I opine, is a man's-size job, all right. Doing it takes so much time, and becomes so absorbing, so exhilarating, that we shall not have a minute left for fault-finding or condemnation. Said Theodore Thomas, "Nothing so awakens an interest in music as helping to make it." In like manner, spiritual harmony among men can be fully appreciated only by helping to produce it.

Out of such a manner of living grows a deep and wonderful wisdom. Yet here is a strange thing. The more wisdom we attain, the more we realize that we can not altogether understand all the facts, forces and impulses of our own individual lives. How foolish, then, to expect others to understand them! And how much more foolish to suppose that we can understand all the facts, forces and impulses in the lives of others! The acme of folly, therefore, consists in our believing that we have any right to sit in judgment upon them.

If you have not yet read Edgar Lee Masters' volume of Whitmanesque verse,

entitled, "Spoon River Anthology," I suggest that you do so. Begin at the very first, and read it through consecutively; otherwise you will miss the point. Each brief stanza tells the story, usually tragic, of one human life; tells it in the first person, as if a voice were speaking from the grave. And one needs but read those little confessions to realize that we do not know the facts of even the most commonplace lives, and that our judgments are therefore always unjust. "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

You can not see it that way?

Well, don't be discouraged. Truth comes slowly. And maybe you have not been trying very long. This old wounded world has been going through the motions of trying for almost twenty centuries. But when you really *want* to know the truth, want it with all your heart and soul, even as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, truth comes with healing in her wings. Human nature is a very mutable thing. The most hopeful fact I know of is that we can change, and that we do change, that we pass continually from plane to plane in our spiritual development. Happy is he whose every step is an upward step!

Twenty-five years ago a friend of mine read a certain book. When he had finished, she wrote these words across the fly-leaf: "I

don't believe a single word of it." Not long ago she came upon that identical book again in the midst of a lot of rubbish and spied the sentiment she had written. Curious to know whether her opinions had changed materially in twenty-five years, she read the book through again. And when she had finished, she inscribed under the first sentiment these very different words: "I believe *every word of it!*"

For individual practise and demonstration:

1. Have you ever been made ill by becoming angry? Is there literal truth in the expression, "Sick with jealousy?"

2. Perhaps you are estranged from one who has been a dear friend. The fault is mostly with the other party. What can you do toward effecting a reconciliation?

3. How many instances do you find recorded in the New Testament in which Jesus won the repentance and loyalty of sinful persons by refraining from condemnation of them? Do you find instances when he employed a different method? What effect did it have?

IV

“LOVE YOUR ENEMIES”

1. THE MATHEMATICS OF HATE

(Matt. 5 : 43-48)

THE PRAYER

This hour, dear Father, we would open our souls on the God-ward side. When we do this, from everything about us come messages as fresh and sweet as the morning. That way are found all beauty and strength, that way lies all healing of spirit. In the earth and sky new mysteries are revealed. In the twilight and the dawning we behold the smile of Infinite Love. Out of the pages of the books we read new and eloquent tongues are speaking. In the hurrying, harrying, never-resting human movement about us we discern a meaning new and divine. And in the wrestlings of our own troubled spirits we learn to discover the working out of the infinite and kindly purposes of God.

And as the light of eternity shines through these open windows of our souls, before us in new graciousness and power stands revealed our wondrous friend, Jesus. We see him as the one who has traveled the road before us. And when doubt comes with its torment, when grief lays its cold hand upon our hearts, when weakness or despair chills the bright warmth of our days, how beyond all price it is to know that his heart has been touched by our every grief, his spirit tortured by our every doubt, his soul agonized by our every weakness; yet victoriously he

met and wrestled with them all. Then it is easy to go forward, knowing that a kindly hand is leading and a heart of infinite pity is giving us strength.

So help us to do this one thing this day, dear Father. Help us to open our souls on the God-ward side. Then the supreme blessing shall be ours, and we shall have no need to pray for lesser things. And in the new courage and illuminations that shall come to us, no problem of life will be without its answer, no task of life too heavy to find its full accomplishment.

Accept our prayer, dear Father, in the gracious name of him who is the Savior of the world.

AMEN.

LESSON FOUR

1. THE MATHEMATICS OF HATE

My first really serious consideration of this text began about a dozen years ago. And it began by hearing a minister preach to this theme. It was a woman minister, too, by the way. And while I do not recall any of the specific statements she made or the arguments she employed, the impression of it has never left me. For the first time I was wholly convinced that the saying, "Love your enemies," was intended to be taken literally and obeyed in the same spirit.

I had then been preaching with some success for seven or eight years; but up to that time I had evidently regarded this and certain other "hard sayings" of Jesus as more or less figurative—and usually more! At any rate, I had never fairly faced the test of meeting them squarely in daily conduct. Now I marvel at such an attitude; not less in myself in those former days than in Christendom generally ever since the words were spoken. Men do not really want to be in the wrong. They are just ignorant and blind, and sometimes stubbornly prejudiced. And these infirmities are always a great barrier against

the incoming of the truth which makes us free.

My purpose this morning is very simple and my aim direct. I believe that Jesus meant just what he said in the text, and that he meant those who would be his disciples in the Christ-spirit to take it seriously and obey it literally. The world has pronounced it foolishness, I know. The world has said that those who do such a thing are either madmen or mollicoddles. We are assured that it is unnatural to do anything but hate our enemies, and that any other policy is one of deliberate self-destruction; for, if we employ any other method, it is argued, our enemies will ultimately overwhelm if not annihilate us. Moreover—and this is the most crushing indictment of all!—it is said to be very unscientific.

But I shall try to convince you, by an appeal to science itself, that every method which is contrary in spirit or practise to the simple words of Jesus, "Love your enemies," is an utter failure. At the risk of seeming to be dogmatic, I affirm that every fundamental teaching of Jesus rests upon a scientific basis, if by science you mean provable truth, that which has been established and may be established again by demonstration. There is a spiritual science which has to do with spiritual forces; and of this Jesus is the great Master

and Interpreter. When he calls upon us to lose our lives that we may find them, when he bids us be not anxious for the morrow, when he demands obedience to the Golden Rule, when he declares that the forgiveness of our sins is conditioned upon our forgiving others, when he charges us to love our enemies and even to bless those that curse us—in all these things he is building upon a foundation against which the very gates of Hades can never prevail. These teachings are revolutionary. That is, they are calculated to overthrow many established practises. And the command to love our enemies is chief of them all.

In dealing with this theme, I shall call to my assistance certain basic principles in mathematics, in biology and in physics, and shall endeavor to show that any practise contrary to this plain command is foolish, unscientific and absurd.

I. THE SCIENCE OF IT

Beginning with mathematics, and very simple mathematics at that, I assert, first, that two and two make four.

You smile at such a kindergarten proposition. But it's true, is it not? By the same principle, one and one make two. I shall rather insist upon this, although Sir Leslie Stephen once suggested, somewhat caustically, that if two and two persist in

making four when we want them to make something else, we should stop putting them together. But we keep right on putting them together, both in arithmetic and morals; and they always persist in making four; just as one and one always persist in making two. And you will agree that this is good mathematics, good science.

Now here is the point.

The world—and this includes most of that part of it that wishes to be known as “scientific” in its attitude toward religion—says that Jesus was just plain crazy in teaching any such impossible doctrine as love for one’s enemies; moreover, that any one who takes that teaching seriously is likewise insane. The world says: Hate your enemy! The world says that hate is natural, that men always have hated. The world says that hate is ingrained in human nature. The world says that Moses was wiser than Jesus, for Moses was a practical man and made practical laws.

But these same scientific gentlemen will agree, I am sure, that one and one make two. Add another hate, *your hate*, to that of your enemy, and you have *two* hates. Isn’t that so? Is that not good mathematics? And, on the particular score, is not the world just twice as bad off morally as it was before?

And this is the conclusion, this is the

sum total of all the help we can get from those who would reject the teachings of Jesus as unnatural, impractical and unscientific.

Now I shall insist that this little sum in addition is correct, and that you can not make anything else out of it. One hate plus another hate makes two hates. And two hates can never, never, equal one love affair. Nor can two wrongs, or any larger aggregation of wrongs, ever make one right. This is as immutable as anything else in mathematics. Jesus was interested in the elimination of evil, and he knew it could not be done by any process of addition. Addition and subtraction are just as exact sciences when employed in the moral realm as when weighing groceries or counting dollars. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth has been the policy of the world. But is it not as plain as sunlight that, when one eye has been gouged out, gouging out the offender's eye does not restore sight to anybody, but just makes another man half blind? The average of human vision is not raised that way. Taking a life for a life brings no one back from the dead, but just breaks a few more hearts and plunges a few more lives into disgrace and shame.

Here we have the "vicious circle," revolving again. This deadly principle applied in war has done nothing less than kill off the fit and strong, leaving the weak and diseased

alive to propagate their kind and thus lower the grade of the whole human family. War to avenge war has been worse than a failure, for it only adds one outrage to another. Hate for hate is a ghastly travesty on justice. It is a common and cheap saying that there is no science in religion. Maybe there is none in what is properly called theology, though I am not at all certain that this is always true. Theology is growing more sane and reverent in these latter days. But when it comes to real religion, when it comes to true moral values, when it comes to moral and spiritual actions and reactions, we are on unshakable ground. The science of Jesus, of which our text is an axiom, is as infallible as the law of gravity, as immutable as a demonstration in mathematics. And the science of Jesus is the basis of *religion*, not of theology. Theology is what men have thought and said about God, as the etymology of the word plainly indicates. Religion is man's sense of relationship with God and the practise of co-operation with Him.

So much for the simple arithmetic of it. You may not be yet persuaded to act upon the word of the Master and to try loving your enemy. But be assured of this. If you hate him, after the manner of the world, you have made the case just twice as bad as it was before. Lincoln wanted it said of him that,

wherever it was possible for him to do so, he had plucked up a weed and planted a flower in its place. What a fine, concrete illustration of just what Jesus teaches! His gospel, when understood in its simplicity, is the simple process of plucking up weeds in human life and planting flowers in their places. In place of the venomous hatred which had struck at him, Jesus put love and forgiveness. But if you meet venom with venom and hate with hate, you have not only failed to pluck up a weed, but you have planted another weed beside it. Tell me, is not that according to the axiom that one and one make two? Is it not in harmony with the immutable science of mathematics?

This prepares the way for the next witness I shall call, which is the science of biology. It is a law of biology that like reproduces its like, each after its own kind. It is only in the thought realm that men presume to ignore this law or dare to flout it. They have somehow believed that this law does not obtain in the moral universe. To be sure, there is no valid basis for such belief in the Bible. But, unfortunately, the Bible, especially the New Testament, has not been very diligently searched from this angle. Jesus himself warned his disciples against expecting to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. Paul said in words that flash and gleam that

whatsoever a man soweth *that* shall he also reap, not some other kind of crop.

Shall we not accept this as a universal principle? It is never challenged in our colleges of agriculture. There it is taught as a demonstrable science. It is equally demonstrable in religion. Hate spawns its own kind, and no other. The certainty of retribution for sin is one of the chief pillars of our spiritual temple. Emerson was right. Sin and its punishment do grow from the same root. Hate and its hateful brood do spring from the same embryo. Individuals, classes, nations, may still hope to disprove that axiom, but they may as well fight the stars in their courses.

I used to have on my study wall a picture which is both interesting and symbolical. An altar-boy has just descended into the basement of the church after assisting in the service. He has put down the pot of incense; and, without stopping even to remove his vestments, is lighting a surreptitious pipe with a taper ignited in the still smoking censer. But the look of blissful enjoyment upon his face would surely be quite marred if he knew what is just behind him. For there stands one of the fathers, struck with surprise, horror and indignation, a whip in his hand and his muscles tensed to inflict punishment upon the blissful smoker. It is a graphic symbol of a universal law. Whenever any one plots an

offense against truth and right, whenever any one is tempted to unleash the dogs of hatred, it would be well for him to look back over his shoulder. He will see a whirlwind gathering. And sooner or later it will strike with all its waste and bitter pain.

There is none too dull to perceive how this law has worked out among the nations. The insane idea has been fostered that the people of one nation ought to hate the people of all other nations as their natural enemies. The mad jealousy of kings has added tinder to these smouldering fires, and wars, interminable and deadly, have been the legitimate result. Nation after nation has been swallowed up and destroyed. The maw of racial and sectional hatred has devoured the best fruits of civilization, science, art and religion, as the last decade has so tragically shown. The old Greek myth tells us that when Cadmus sowed the dragon's teeth of hate in the ground, the harvest was a crop of full-armed soldiers, who immediately turned in fury upon one another, and fought till all but five were slain before they awoke to their fratricidal folly.

The law is quite as immutable in its dealings with the individual. Sow the wind of hatred and you must reap the whirlwind, sometimes objectively, sometimes subjectively. As was pointed out in our last lesson, subjective results often come in the form of

nervousness, insanity and sickness of divers kinds. It has been scientifically demonstrated that hatred, and its twin-brother anger, secrete an actual poison in the bloodstream, a toxin which may be segregated by chemical analysis. This poison is the prolific mother of sickness. You will recall how graphically this is brought out in Gene Stratton Porter's fine story, "The Harvester." You will remember that Ruth was racked with illness and pain, though the exact nature of her malady had not been determined. You will remember also that she was nursing a bitter hatred towards one who had caused her mother to suffer. The Harvester had wisely divined that her hatred and her sickness were related to each other as cause and effect; and he advised her to put her grievance out of her mind entirely. During their conversation, Ruth, who has not grasped the truth which the Harvester has so shrewdly guessed, asks petulantly, "But what about *my pain?*" Even if she consent to forget the pain her mother had endured, could she forget her own? Listen to the Harvester's reply. It is worthy of many hearings and rehearings. "The only way on earth to cure it is through forgiveness. That, and that only, will ease it all away, and leave you happy and free for life and love."

So again we have the witness of science that any policy contrary to the plain com-

mand of Jesus is foolish and fatal. Hate your enemy if you will. But be assured that it will certainly produce nothing but a many-fold crop of hatred. Skeptics still believe that they can sow wild oats and reap wheat, that they can sow hate and not garner the harvest thereof. Some even pride themselves on being what they call "good haters." You have heard people boast of it, as if it were a matter of pride. As well be proud of a cancer, or scarlet fever, or a feeble mind! Jesus teaches the true science that like reproduces its like; that each begets after its own kind; that whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap. "They that plow iniquity and sow trouble shall reap the same." Is that not in harmony with the science of biology?

The last witness I shall call is the science of physics. And one only of its axioms shall we note: *Reaction is always equal to action, in the contrary direction, and on the same plane.*

Simple illustrations of this law are the boy bouncing his ball against the side of the house, a billiard ball shot against the edge of the table, or a crokinole man against the edge of the board. These missiles always rebound, they always come back. Theoretically they rebound with just as much force as that with which they strike, though practically some allowance must be made for the resistance of friction. Where gravity does not interfere,

they return on exactly the same plane; and if they strike the obstruction at right angles, they always return over precisely the same path. In common speech we sum it up by saying that action and reaction are always equal.

Again we find a law of science operating without deviation in the moral realm. Whatever we give out is reflected back to us. The man who goes down the street with a smile on his face sees that smile reflected on almost every face he meets. How else do you account for the contagion of laughter? But when "old grouch" comes along, what a difference! He who is a lover and well-wisher, and proves it in his life, finds the good-will of the world coming back to him. All the world does love a lover, and right here is the explanation. Love and you will be loved, though sometimes tardily. But if you hate, the venom of it ultimately comes back to you through the operation of the same law, just as surely as the ball bounces back from the wall into the school-boy's hands. These all come back, and on their own planes. To give hate for hate is to remain on the plane of hate. It is to be restricted and constricted of body, soul and spirit.

Many have become strong and detestable on the plane of hatred, but no one ever became really great on that plane. One must

rise to the love-plane to be great. Lincoln is not great because he was President and exercised great power. Johnson was President after him, but who ever speaks Johnson's name? Jesus is the greatest soul and the tenderest memory of the world just because he loved to the uttermost. Would to God that all who presume to speak in his name could learn the meaning of that truth! If the size of his audiences is a true criterion, Billy Sunday is the greatest living evangelist. Yet he is reported to have said this in one of his picturesque sermons: "It's a good thing I'm not God for fifteen minutes. I'd fill your papers with obituaries, and fill freight cars with the dead!" In view of such murderous utterances, we may fairly assume that the only thing that restrains this man from wholesale slaughter is lack of power. To realize the difference between such bluster and real greatness, compare that with the winning appeals of Moody and Phillips Brooks. Follow up the thought, and compare Jonathan Edwards with St. Francis, and John Calvin with the great-souled Emerson. Our hearts sense the difference in a moment. We may not have been able always to explain it; but the secret is revealed right here in this scientific statement of the different planes of action and reaction. Lincoln, Moody, Brooks, St. Francis and Emerson are all on the love-

plane. They gave out love to the world, and the world has laid its tribute of love at their feet.

A valiant fighter against the liquor traffic a few years ago was former Governor Hanly, of Indiana. He had a lecture in which he introduced every sentence of a long peroration with the vindictive words, "I hate it!" No one ever desired more earnestly than I to see the curse of liquor wiped out; yet I shall never forget the impression made upon me the first time I heard Hanly deliver that lecture. I went seeking encouragement and inspiration. The address was strong, no question about that. That tremendous phrase, "I hate it!" rolled out with all the forensic power of which that great orator was capable, thrilled me. Yet there was something almost ghastly in it. The effect was that of looking upon some scene of tragic horror. Nor did it fill me with a passion for the opposite of what he was denouncing. It just left me racked and torn and emotionally exhausted. I left the hall with a sense of weariness and utter discouragement.

At the time I did not understand why. I thought there must be something wrong with myself. But now I understand. Hanly's work, though magnificently conceived and born of the noblest motives, was on the wrong plane. He was on the hate-plane, in-

dulging the spirit of hate. And whoever does that, however hateful the object of his hatred, blights the sweetness of his own spirit; for that hate is reflected back to him with the certainty of death. How much better to have risen to the love-plane, and there told what he loved! It would have accomplished his purpose so much better! How much better to have painted the picture of a man sun-crowned and free, than to have dragged us all into the gutter where the drunkard lay! How much better to have shown us a home where love and peace and plenty dwelt, than to have tortured us with pictures of misery! How much better to have thrilled us with the vision of a nation free from the curse of alcohol, a nation of noble men, and happy women and care-free children, than such a picture as he gave us of want and squalor and woe! That would have sent us away in love with the good, and pledged in our hearts to help realize it. That would have caught in the heart-strings of every man who was the slave of drink; in it he would have seen the true reflection of himself as he is in God; that love-filled home he would have recognized as one in which he had the divine right to dwell; that nation, cleansed from a curse, one in which he might claim shelter and citizenship. What need to tell the drunkard of wasted lives and blasted homes? He

knows that story only too well. What need to tell any of us of our failures, our sins and our broken-heartedness? We know that story only too well. Tell us something sweet and beautiful, something that will renew our strength and put new heart into us, something that will give back the vision and fervor of days ago. Climb up, O man of God, to that love-plane, where dwell the souls of just men made perfect, and speak to us of that love of God which passeth all understanding, that love which is healing and unutterable, that love that will not let us go. No man was ever saved by telling him how bad he is. He knows that well enough. He knows well enough that he has wandered into a far country of famine and husks and swine. He only wants to be assured that there is still room and a welcome for him in the Father's house. And it is only from the love-plane that such a message can be spoken.

II. YOUR PART IN IT

Yes, I anticipate your difficulty, though it may not be quite clear in your own mind. The very immutability of these laws, you say, terrifies us. It kills hope in our hearts. These are blind forces, you say, forces without life and pity. The world is full of hate. Hate is breeding hate. Millions are sending forth thoughts of hate. What can we do that we

be not destroyed by the very mercilessness of the laws of which you have spoken?

We can do everything! Right here is where we get into the game. Hate plus hate makes more hate, it is true. But it is in our power to choose whether we shall perform a plus or a minus operation. Biologically it is true that like produces like. But it is ours to choose what we shall conceive and bring to birth in our hearts. It is a law of physical science that whatever you send out is reflected back to you. But we can choose what we shall send out.

Men and women, what a gospel this is! It makes you the very pivot of the whole scheme of redemption. You are not a clod, or a stone, or a pawn on the chessboard of fate. You are a living soul, made in the image and partaking of the very spirit of God. All the forces which make your life must needs work through you. In passing through you those forces take on what character you will, as the light which streams through yonder windowpane comes out saturated with the rich tints of the glass. The moral forces which pass through your soul come out saturated with the color and character of your soul. What is that color, what is that character? As a student of the spiritual science of Jesus, what must they be? What must we do to make them what they ought to be? Do what

he told us to do. Jesus asks no impossibilities, but he does summon us to godlike action; for to love one's enemies is not less than godlike. It is the very bigness of the appeal that pulls us. It is an appeal to help him help God—just think of it!—to help him help God in conquering this hate-filled world by the power of his ineffable love. Partners of Jesus and co-workers with God!

“Through love to light! O wonderful the way
That leads from darkness to the perfect day!
From darkness and from sorrow of the night
To morning that comes singing o'er the sea.
Through love to light!
Through light, O God, to Thee,
The Love of love, the eternal Light of light.”

For individual practise and demonstration:

1. Have you been wont to think of this saying of Jesus, "Love your enemies," as only figurative? If so, how is the figure to be interpreted? Is it, then, useful as a help in every day Christian life?

2. What other sayings in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) would prove equally revolutionary if literally obeyed?

3. Can capital punishment be justified in view of this explicit teaching of Jesus? Can any kind of retributive punishment?

4. Perhaps you have heard this bit of sophistry:

The Bible tells us to love our enemies. Whiskey is our enemy. Therefore we should love whiskey.

What is wrong with this argument? How would you refute it?

IV

"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES"

2. KILLING YOUR ENEMY

(Matt. 5 : 43-48)

THE PRAYER

Dear Father, we want to begin at the beginning to-day. We want to learn just the alphabet of the victorious and abounding life. We want to learn the simple truths of the spirit in words of one syllable. We want to become as little children in the school of the Master. And that we may do this, help us to be done with all pride and passion and prejudice. Just help us to lay open our hearts to the lesson of the hour, and give us grace to receive it though it contradict everything we have been taught in the days of our self-sufficiency.

Dear Father, just make our hearts fresh and fallow ground in which the seeds of eternal truth shall find place to grow and bear much fruit.

If we are nursing enmity toward any one, help us, O God, to cast it aside. If there is any evil intent in our hearts, help us to spew it out as a thing abhorred. If any thought of hatred or jealousy or revenge is in our souls, help us to put it utterly away. Above all these meannesses help us to rise with new grace and power. And may love and good-will possess all our lives.

May unselfishness become the keynote of all our days. May human service be the goal of

our every ambition. Thus shall we be true followers of him in whose name we make our petition.

AMEN.

LESSON FOUR

2. KILLING YOUR ENEMY

“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies.”

Where but in the Sermon on the Mount could a saying like that be found? But not long since I heard it stated that a certain “independent” preacher in a large Western city—I call him a preacher advisedly, I could not call him a *minister*—said to his congregation that the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew ought to be called, “The Sarcasm on the Mount.” I should hate to have the responsibility of that statement on my soul. But, fortunately, as he is an “independent” preacher, the responsibility does not involve any of the rest of us.

Perhaps this preacher is not to blame for being ignorant of the Master’s meaning. But no one is justified in ridiculing what he does not understand, just because he does not understand it. Perhaps he shares the almost universal belief that to love one’s enemies is contrary to nature. I admit that it is, if by nature you mean that instinctive impulse to strike back in kind when one is struck. But

in the same breath I maintain that our sole business as Christians is to improve upon that aboriginal kind of nature. Is it not declared in the very first chapter of the Book that man is to have dominion over all things? We do a lot of boasting about our conquests. We have chained electricity and harnessed the waterfalls. We have conquered the air, we have annihilated space, we have penetrated into the heart of the seas, we have compelled nature to disgorge abundantly where once she doled out her gifts with a niggardly hand. But we have stopped right there. *We have not conquered ourselves!* And because of that fundamental failure all these lesser conquests in the realm of nature are being used for our self-destruction.

The tragic paradox of it! We can lay waste all our cities and blight all the choice fruits of our civilization, but we can not rule our own spirits. Then we build more cities and grow more fruits, only to destroy them again. It is the "vicious circle" once more. And the fatalistic philosophy that to hate one's enemy is according to the first law of nature is the pagan deity to which it does homage. To hate a fellow-man, for any cause whatsoever, is to surrender to that fatalism. And if that be nature, it is high time to improve upon it. We must master that nature or be its bond-servants. And we shall master

it only through an alliance with the higher Nature, the divine Nature which is supremely exemplified in Jesus.

I. THE MEANING OF "LOVE"

Now it is not to be denied that this saying has been the occasion of much honest perplexity on the part of many good people. Possibly the preacher of whom I just spoke is one of them. Love and hate are both very strong terms. The best of us are liable to error in using them; and we must be on our guard right here against a too hasty conclusion. I remember the real distress of one person particularly in seeking to comprehend that other baffling saying of Jesus, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple." One's first hasty impulse is to repudiate any philosophy or any philosopher that asks us to hate our own families.

But let us take time to ponder, let us not do anything rash. Two facts must be taken into consideration here. One is that we are dealing with an Oriental saying; the other is that the language Jesus used was not rich and flexible like our English tongue. The language Jesus used was not Greek, as is commonly supposed, but Aramaic, a kind of Arabic dia-

lect. To understand something of the poverty of this dialect will help us greatly in our present difficulty. It did not have many synonyms, and there were few words expressing fine shades of meaning. A very interesting book is "The Syrian Christ," written by Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, himself a Syrian, born and reared within a few miles of where Jesus lived, taught and died. Mr. Rihbany is now a Christian minister in Boston, and he knows the languages both of the Orient and of the Occident. What is more important still, he understands the *spirit* of those languages. He has included in his book a chapter covering this very text, and I shall quote a paragraph or two.

"The word 'love' has been more highly specialized in the West than in the East. In its proper English use it means only that ardent, amorous feeling which can not be created by will and design. In the West the word 'love' has been relieved of the function of expressing the less ardent desires such as the terms 'to like,' 'to have good-will toward,' and 'to be well-disposed toward' imply. Not so in the East. The word 'like,' meaning 'to be favorably inclined toward,' is not found either in the Bible or in the Arabic tongue. . .

"So to us Orientals the only word which can express any cordial inclinations of approval is 'love.' One loves his wife and children, and loves grapes and figs and meat, if he likes these things. An employer says to an employee, 'If you *love* to work for me according to this agreement, you can.' It is nothing

uncommon for one to say to a casual acquaintance, whom he likes, 'I must say, *Sahib* (friend), that I love you.' I know of no equivalent in the Arabic for the phrase, 'I am interested in you.' 'Love' and 'hate' are the usual terms by which to express approval and disapproval, as well as real love and hatred. . . .

"From all this it may be seen that when the Great Oriental Teacher said to his countrymen, who considered all other clans than their own as their enemies, 'Love your enemies,' he did not mean that they should be enamoured of them, but that they should have good-will toward them. We can not love by will and design, but we certainly can will to be well-disposed even toward those who, we believe, have ill-will toward us. He who really thinks this an impossibility gives evidence not of superior 'critical knowledge,' but of being still in the lower stages of human evolution."

Now all this is very illuminating. And I would have you by no means overlook the last sentence. To love our enemies does not mean mush or gush; it does not mean foolish, or even wise, sentimentalism concerning them. Jesus just means that we are to have *good-will* even toward our enemies. And, as Mr. Rihbany says, we can be well-disposed even toward those who have ill-will toward us. That is, we can *will* to feel good-will.

This puts the matter right into our own hands, and makes us responsible for the way we handle it. Let us hark back for a moment to the point made in concluding our last

lesson. It is in your power to determine what your reaction will be in the face of your enemy's hostile spirit. You are not a wall, with no power to do anything but throw back whatever is thrown against you. You are not a stick or a clod or a pawn to be contemptuously thrust aside. You are a living soul, a being created in the image of God and partaking of the nature and spirit of God. You are a partner with God in shaping the moral order of the world. Every moral influence that touches you takes on a different character because of you. You have the power of deciding, deliberately, calmly deciding, what that difference is to be. When the spirit of enmity assails you, what are you going to do with it? You have two choices. You can react in the same spirit, and on the same moral plane, adding hate to hate, and spawning more of the same hateful brood. Or you can so deflect, absorb and transmute that spirit that it shall become a veritable angel of healing and light. You are at the forks of the road.

This is the supreme test of Christian discipleship. Then, of all times, we need to remember our divine inheritance. We need to remember that we are children of God, and that our master-impulses are from above, not from the earth earthy. Then, of all times, we need to know the meaning of comradeship

with Jesus. It is told of Saint Theresa that she had in her room a picture of Jesus talking with the woman of Samaria at the well of Sychar. She loved to look at it and ponder its meaning. And often she would stop before it, and whisper earnestly, "Lord, give me of that water." So do we need to have before us the picture of Jesus on the cross forgiving his murderers their blasphemy and hatred. We need to stop often before that picture, and whisper, "Master, give me thy spirit, that I, too, may find grace to forgive and love my enemies." This is not mere emotionalism. It is an act of the will, a will controlled by a love and a wisdom not of this world. It is becoming superior to what men call human nature.

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our *wills* are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, *to make them thine.*"

II. THE METHOD OF JESUS

There is no human relationship in which there is a sharper apparent conflict between the ideal and the practical than just here. I say *apparent* conflict, and I use the word advisedly. A man says to me: "I am in hearty sympathy with the idealism of such teachings. We certainly ought to have good-will toward our enemies; and, sometime, when the race of

men has grown more perfect, we shall perhaps be able to apply the principle in daily life. But I am a practical man, and I believe in using practical methods, methods that promise some degree of success."

Good! Shake! I am glad to meet a practical man; and I am always interested in methods that promise success. So I am going to devote the rest of this lesson to an endeavor to show that the method of Jesus is the only practical method ever proposed. I am going to challenge that easy, reactionary device of damning every forward-looking proposition out of hand by calling it "impractical idealism."

The only practical way of dealing with our enemies is to get rid of them. And Jesus shows us how to do that *by getting rid of enmity*. Do you know of any better way? Do you know of any other practical method? Hating and "getting even" have been called practical; but they have yet to score a single success. Europe proves that to-day. The whole world, torn and shattered and bankrupt, and at its wits' end, proves that to-day. Every feud you ever engaged in proves it. Every ugly word you speak in answer to an ugly word proves it. You say you are a practical man. Run back through world history, and point out to me a single instance where hatred and hateful methods have ever suc-

ceeded in doing anything but crucify the hatred and eventually destroy the hater. Then point out to me the instances where love and good-will have ever ultimately failed.

The method of Jesus is practical for just one simple but invincible reason: *It puts one in alliance with God.* Why did he exhort his disciples to love their enemies and to pray for their persecutors? That they might be true children of their Father in Heaven; that is, that they might manifest the Father's spirit. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and on the unjust. To love is to co-operate with God. To have good-will is to join hands with the Eternal. Men used to think that God hates evil and evil men. Some of the most blood-curdling parts of the Old Testament are reflections of that unhappy superstition. But the spirit of the new covenant witnesses that God is love. He that loveth is born of God and abideth in God; while he that hateth abideth in death, is the word of the apostle. Then, to be in alliance with God, we must love. And above all we must love our enemies, for there is no especial virtue in loving our friends. Do not even the publicans the same? There is no other way to be rid of enmity, and it is enmity that makes enemies. Wise old Marcus Aurelius well said, "The best way of avenging thy-

self is not to become like the wrong-doer."

This is God's method, and it is the method of transmutation. Over and over again God makes all things new. Not by new creation, but by working the old material into new forms by the inspiration of a new spirit. The material substance in the swelling buds of the springtime has passed through countless mutations since the cycles of time began. On the fields of Flanders to-day the iron of rusting shells, mingled with human gore, is producing richer harvests of grain. We shudder to think of it. But, after all, it is beautiful. If men will shed their blood, wise nature will not let it be utterly waste. You remember the words of Omar Khayyam:

"I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropped in her lap from some once lovely Head.

"And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!"

The method of Jesus applies this same principle in the moral realm. He conquers by making his enemies his friends. Paul, the erst-while hater and fire-eater, by that same spiritual transmutation, becomes the author of the immortal thirteenth chapter of First

Corinthians. Tradition says that Julian the Apostate, when about to die, cried out, "Galilean, thou hast conquered!" In his book, "Twice-Born Men," Harold Begbie tells the story of "Old Born Drunk," a man who at the age of forty-five was habitually so sodden with drink that none of his neighbors remembered seeing him sober—hence the name, "Old Born Drunk." Yet the wondrous love of God came into that man's heart and made him over. And whenever anybody in that section of London disputed the reality of religion, the reply always was, "Well, anyhow, what about 'Old Born Drunk?'" They still talk of his funeral. "Thousands of people lined the streets and followed the procession to the cemetery. The entire district turned out like one man to see the last of 'Old Born Drunk'—to stare, perhaps, at the pageant, to be influenced, however, whether they wished it or not, by the good end of a brave fighter. A stranger entering that quarter of the town would have thought that the populace had turned out for the funeral of their prince." That's the way God does it. He makes men over, transmutes them by the power of His love from enemies to friends and martyrs for the truth.

It can not be done in any other way. And in doing it that way is co-operating with God. Your enemy is just a piece of sturdy

raw material, which it is your business and privilege to make over. You can make him a friend and ally if you will. But you can not do it by hating him. You must employ love and good-will. Certain savage tribes had a superstition that the strength of every enemy slain and eaten passed into themselves and made them that much stronger. Put this on a spiritual plane and it becomes grandly true. The strength of every enmity you overcome by the spirit of love passes into your soul and adds to your moral power.

Harken now to a classical illustration of this great principle. A brother king said of Lycurgus, the law-giver of Sparta, "Who can say he is anything but good? He is even so to the bad." Such eulogy was well deserved, for he employed only this practical method. On one occasion the Spartans had become greatly incensed at a certain piece of legislation, and had gathered to make protest. Let Plutarch tell what happened:

"They collected in a body against Lycurgus, and from ill words came to throwing stones, so that at length he was forced to run out of the market-place and make to a sanctuary to save his life. By good hap he outran all except one Alcander, a young man not otherwise ill accomplished, but hasty and violent, who came up so close to him that, when he turned to see who was near him, he struck him upon the face with his stick, and put out one of his eyes. Lycurgus, so far from

being daunted and discouraged by this accident, stopped short and showed his disfigured face and eye beat out to his countrymen; they, dismayed and ashamed at the sight, delivered Alcander into his hands to be punished, and escorted him home, with expressions of great concern for his ill-usage. Lycurgus, having thanked them for their care of his person, dismissed them all, excepting only Alcander; and, taking him with him into his house, neither did nor said anything severely to him, but, dismissing those whose place it was, bade Alcander wait upon him at table. The young man, who was of an ingenuous temper, without murmuring did what was commanded; and, being thus admitted to live with Lycurgus, had an opportunity to observe in him, besides his gentleness and calmness of temper, an extraordinary sobriety and an indefatigable industry, and so, from an enemy, became one of his most zealous admirers, and told his friends and relatives that Lycurgus was not that morose and ill-natured man they had formerly taken him for, but the one mild and gentle character of the world. And thus did Lycurgus, for the chastisement of his fault, make of a wild and passionate youth one of the discreetest citizens of Sparta."

What a splendid example of overcoming an enemy by making him a friend! What a splendid example of God's method of transmutation! What would have been the effect, think you, if Lycurgus had given way to rage and thrown Alcander into a dungeon? Also there is an interesting side-light here on the question of disarmament which I can not forbear to let pass. Plutarch goes on to say

that thereafter no one was permitted even to carry a staff into their public assemblies. That story should be made a special order for the next meeting of the League of Nations!

III. THE UNIFYING SPIRIT

Prof. Max Mueller once said a striking thing. "The carnal mind and the spiritual mind are seen to act in this way: The carnal always detects *differences*, while the spiritual notes *similarities*." The contrast between man's way and God's way was never more clearly pointed out. Man, on the carnal plane, is forever noting differences and, therefore, forever creating enmity and strife. But man, when he rises to the spiritual plane, notes similarities; and the result is harmony and peace wherever this higher law is given unhindered right of way. You can love your enemy only by looking for some similarity, some common ground of sympathy, upon which you can stand together. You can never do it by keeping your attention glued to your differences. "If you meet a sectary or a hostile partisan," says Emerson, "never recognize the dividing lines, but meet on what common ground remains—if only that the sun shines and the rain rains for both—and the area will widen very fast, and ere you know it, the boundary mountains on which the eye had fastened have melted into air."

People are not as unlike as we think. One small difference, when exaggerated, soon throws all our agreements into the shadow, as one small cloud, because it is so close to the ground, obscures the whole face of the sun. Calvin and Servetus agreed on all but a few points of doctrine. But because of the exaggerated importance of those few the great agreements were overlooked, and Calvin had Servetus burned at the stake! Doctrinal differences in Christendom are important, but not sufficiently important to set Christians snatching and snarling at one another like a pack of infidel dogs. When Christians begin to do that they cease to be Christians. Each is entitled to his own opinions, to be sure. But we do not unite on opinions. We never can unite on opinions. That has been the tragedy of our divided and warring Protestantism—we have been trying to get together on opinions, and quarreling because the attempt is a failure. *We unite on principles.* The union of Christendom will never come till we recognize our similarities, and proceed deliberately to make them the basis of union. The ground of all our similarities lies in a few great fundamental principles. And as long as we do not try to limit them by verbal definitions we can walk together in peace and good fellowship.

We might begin this great adventure by seriously attempting to obey this command

of him whom we all acknowledge as Master and Leader, "Love your enemies." That is God's way, the spiritual way, and it is well for us that it is so. God sees in each of us that which is good, that which is like Himself. And His patient long-suffering bides the time when we shall so apprehend His spirit that "the boundary mountains" will indeed all melt away.

Let me emphasize this point, it is so tremendously important. Right here is the reason for the bitter enmities among the cults and denominations. We are yet on the carnal plane, noting differences. We pass over the great identities. Great as the differences are, they can never justify enmity. They are only opinions and dogmas at the best. Immensely greater are the identities, when we stop to note them. They underlie the foundation upon which we all stand. Indeed they *are* the foundation. We are all seeking God. We are all seeking to know His will. We are all seeking the coming of His kingdom in the hearts of men. And when the day comes that this universal identity is recognized and acknowledged in Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Partialist and Universalist, Trinitarian and Unitarian, Presbyterian and Methodist, Episcopalian and Quaker, then religion will rise to the plane of the spirit, man will begin under-

standingly to co-operate with God, and all the ends of the earth shall know His salvation. And the same sympathetic policy among the nations will insure the era of universal peace. Let the nations unitedly and unqualifiedly seek *first* the welfare and happiness of all the peoples of the earth and Christ will have laid Mars forever at his feet.

Now nothing is practical except that which can be practised with moral success. And herein lies the beauty of the Master's teaching. It works! But our time will have been quite wasted if we have not learned how to begin the actual demonstration of it. *It must begin with us as individuals.* But do not wait until you understand the whole philosophy of it before making a beginning. As well insist upon understanding the science of mathematics before commencing to add. The way to understand it is to do it; the way to begin is to begin. Begin with your own specific case, and get rid of your enemies by killing the spirit of enmity in your own heart. Your own attitude is all you are responsible for; and that, by the grace of God, is in your own power to control.

Maybe you can not begin by really, sincerely loving your enemy. Maybe at first you can not even feel good-will toward him. Never mind. Jesus anticipated that very difficulty in giving the direction. You can

at least pray for him, according to the command. And it will be three-fourths a prayer for yourself. Jesus knew you would have to make an alliance with God before you could do this thing. And let us pray not so much that God shall change our enemies—that is none of our concern!—but that we may have help to change our own attitude toward them from hate to good-will. Say over and over in your heart, as you pray: “I am not your enemy; you are not my enemy. I have only good-will for you.” Then heed the rest of the commandment. *Do good to them that hate you.* Perform some kind service for them. Go out of your way to do it if necessary. *Feel* kindly while you are doing it. And the time will soon come when you can actually *say* to your erstwhile foe, and *mean it* with all your heart: “Brother, we must not be at odds. You are God’s child, and I am God’s child. We are of one blood, one life, one spirit. One child of God can not knowingly do injury to another of God’s children. Come, let us be friends.” Thus, even if you do not eventually win him who has been at enmity with you, you will have conquered yourself—a feat greater than the taking of a city!

Do not wait for the other to take the initiative. Get there first. That is victory. Rise above the carnal plane. Be willing to go the second mile. All our great moral vic-

tories are won on the second mile. Try it. It is practical. It is more than that; it is the only method that *never fails*. And not otherwise can we be disciples and friends of the bravest, tenderest, gentlest soul that ever glorified the earth.

“Thou art the Way: to feel, to know
The goodness throned above,
There is no other way than thine—
To lead the life of love.

“Thou art the Life: in thee we own
The likeness all may wear,
Who, one with thee, for truth and right
Will learn to do and dare.

“O Brother of the righteous will,
O Brother full of grace,
What glory waits the sons of men,
Foreshadowed in thy face!”

For individual practise and demonstration:

1. A wonderful demonstration is suggested in the last three paragraphs of this last lesson. Have you the courage to undertake it?

2. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), in the American Version, is paragraphed, each paragraph treating a specific teaching. Besides the Beatitudes, which employ the first twelve verses, and serve as an introduction to the whole Sermon, there are seventeen such paragraph divisions. Study them carefully, and meditate upon them, beginning with the first, taking a paragraph each day. In what respects are any of these basic teachings of Jesus out of spiritual agreement with the basic teachings of the Mosaic Code? Do we need anything else to enable us to live as true Christians? Does Christendom need any other creed or confession of faith?

THE END

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